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WRITTEN TO ORDER:

BEING

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE JOURNEYINGS OF AN IRRESPONSIBLE EGOTIST,

AND

OF HOW HE ENJOYED HIMSELF THEREON.

98069

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "A DAY OF MY LIFE AT ETON," ETC.

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SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,

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1885.

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WRITTEN TO ORDER.

PROLOGUE.

I HAD been to South America, and I did think that now I had succeeded in bringing myself back safe, I might be allowed to enjoy a little domestic peace. But, oh dear, no! My immediate circle is not very extensively given to travelling, and people do not return to it from South America every day; consequently I was compelled to stay indoors more than was good for me, to receive people who made up parties to come and inspect me as if I were a kind of natural curiosity, and catechise me on all sorts of matters about which they thought it a good opportunity to acquire information. I did as much as I could for them, and told everybody what he or she—especially she—wanted, as far as I knew; and when I found that wasn't sufficient for them, I added one or two things further than I knew; but still they were not satisfied. I began to wish devoutly that some one else would turn up from the interior of Australia, or the Great Sahara, or Nova Zembla, or anywhere he liked, so long as he served to divert some of the inconveniences of fame from me; but no such friend in need was to

hand, and at last, feeling that I was overdoing it, or rather that it was overdoing me, and that a few months of this retravelling the whole expedition over again would quite finish me, I determined to check the evil—not exactly in the bud, as it was about three weeks old already, but at any rate as near the bud as possible—and so, having summoned a select few of the nearest and most confidential of my relatives, I adopted that peculiar sort of smile which is usual when one has something disagreeable to say, and hasn't the slightest hope that one may be able to deceive the other person into believing that one has not, and revealed the true state of my feelings.

"Why don't you write a book?" suggested someone.

I retired at once to reflect; the idea struck me as having something in it. It certainly would save a great deal of trouble to put everything together and lump it on my friends in a consolidated mass—but then, would it be worth while to concoct a volume for such a comparatively limited circle? Or would the public in general support it? I intimated my grounds for hesitation when I next found myself face to face with a family gathering.

But the notion had been meanwhile actively propagated behind my back, especially among the fairer portion of the community, and what had begun as a spark was now fanned into a flame. There was a furious determination on all sides that I must write a book, and a general chorus of virtuous indignation arose.

"O, but you mustn't be so lazy! Everybody who travels now writes books. Why, look at cousin Tom; he went down to Lowestoft this summer, and has made quite a nice book about it: 'Banjos and Bathing-Machines; or, Shimmerings from a Shingly Shore!'"

"And has it had a very large sale?" I asked. I thought it as well to be sure of all the *pros* and *cons* before I set to work, if I did so at all.

"Well," the spokeslady of the chorus replied, "I don't think it has exactly had that; I believe he was cheated by the publishers, and the critics were rather hard on him; they always are on an author's first book, you know; but it's a very pretty book, with Russia binding and gilt letters on the back, and such a lovely flower border on the first page. There's a copy on that table."

I took it up and ran a paper-cutter between the first two pages. "Hum," I said—

"O, yes, I know it isn't cut yet, but I'm going to read it as soon as I can. There's such a lot to read now that one really can't keep up with all that's written. I've just got to finish Miss Broughton's last, and then after I've looked through Froude I shall get on to Tom's book."

"And when would my turn come, then?" I asked.

Chorus again: "O, how can you say that? Of course, we shall all read your book as soon as it is written!"

I thought, but I didn't say, "Did you tell cousin Tom that?"

Still I hesitated. There was certainly a kind of fascination about writing a book, but as against

this there was a fearful amount of responsibility in the undertaking.

"I don't think I should have enough to write about," I objected.

"O, yes, you must have seen lots in South America. And then there's all the geography, and the birds and beasts, and the governments and customs you can say things about, and—"

I interrupted them in the wild career of their catalogue of the contents of my book that was to be. "If that's the sort of thing you expect me to produce," I said, "I may as well cut short the proceedings at once. If I go attempting to compile a South American primer for the use of those uninformed as to those parts, I shall soon be getting into hot water with the critics. I didn't go out with any such intention, and so I haven't taken any measures for it; I went out as myself, and for myself, and have come back in very much the same mind, and I should be very sorry afterwards if I were to learn that any private ideas I had picked up and published had caused any person or persons to descend into their graves, cursing me for having influenced their destinies by prejudicing them for or against the country. And if it is my personal adventures you want, they have not been of that wildly romantic character—in fact, I may say they have been of so exceedingly contrary a nature—well, taking one thing with another, and adding to the sum total the risk incurred by my entangling myself in the trammels of grammar and spelling, I think it would be my safest plan—not."

Another scream of indignation. "Then where was the good of my going all the way to South America and back, if I didn't write a book about it? I might just as well have stopped at home, and let someone else have gone."

Personally, I was rather of the same opinion myself. My tendencies have always been rather towards the more domestic style of life, and I believe I could compile a far more exciting set of adventures over a warm fire in my own room than under one in the battlefield; and such poetic feelings as may be in me would be much more readily stirred by the purring of a pussy-cat on the hearth-rug than by the howling of the wind through the cordage of a ship. But circumstances had ruled that I should have gone, and I had been.

I threw in one objection after another; I quoted Job as an authority against writing a book, but that only produced an outburst against the very supposition that I had any enemies. It was even as at a political meeting; every one was gloriously unanimous, and woe to the luckless one who should dare even to hint that the whole feeling of the country was not with me to a lady.

Then I again resorted to my lack of materials. A very limited diary, a few sort of sketches, as to which I couldn't be at all certain if I could recall what they were originally meant for, and some old hotel and washing bills, were all I could produce on which to ground this great work. But it was no good; every one said I only had to make a start, and it would all come back to me; this was

especially impressed upon me by a male who was present, who had had much experience in writing tales "founded on fact," but rather of an inverted pyramidical type, with the foundation the smallest part of them.

They seemed to know how to do it so much better than I did, that I proposed their taking my materials and writing the book for themselves. But they wouldn't go so far as that; they would do everything *but* that, they said, only let me write the book, and—

I am a weak-minded individual. I am afraid I should never do for a dictator or anything of that sort; I have too much consideration for the little feelings of others. But it seemed to me that I had so little to do with the origination of this book, that it would be unjust for me to claim any responsibility in it.

"Then it shall be your book," I said; "beyond writing it, I wash my hands of it. I am, as it were, a mere machine under your care, and when such things as I am capable of have been ground out of me, you will have to face all critics; you will have to answer for any imperfections, such as failures in supposed objects, violations of unities, and other literary things of that nature; my faults will be the faults of the inventors of the machine, all the blame—"

"O, but there will be nothing but praise," somebody said.

"That of course will materially alter the circumstances," I answered, preparing to leave them to think over their rashness. "Well, good-night,

ladies. I am now going to retire to the seclusion of my chamber to work out this prodigious idea of yours. The die is cast ; the Rubicon is passed ; anything, everything has happened which presages a new era in the world's history— "

" The mountain is quaking—" put in some one who had intruded himself on the meeting without an invitation—

I withered him with a look, and continued : " I am going to make this book. Do not let the author be disturbed ; you are requested not to touch the machinery ; on no account allow any one to approach within ten yards of my door, save for the purpose of administering towards my bodily sustenance. Until it is finished—and then—" I added in an aside as I went upstairs, closed the door, and taking off my coat and laughing in my sleeve—I was quite reckless by this time—settled myself down with a pen in front of a ream of paper—

You have asked for you know not what ; you must take what you can get and bear the consequences."

CHAPTER I.

TO BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING.

CONSCIENCE said to me, "John, you're wasting your time at the University; you're not working half hard enough; this Tripos work is a mere farce; you must take up something else."

I had been up nearly two years at Cambridge, and was reading for history honours. I said, "Conscience, you're right. I have long been convinced that there has been a something wanting in my present mode of life. I *will* take up something besides my Tripos. I will go in for a Scholarship."

By which it will be seen on what excellent terms I am with my Conscience. We seldom disagree, and when we do—well, it isn't usually I that have to give way in the end.

But there was no question of disagreement here. We both felt the existing want of variety in my work was bad for me, and I ought to begin to make myself conspicuous in some way, or the authorities would forget me, and when they came to look over my papers in my Tripos they would say: "Rollinston, John Rollinston! Who's he? Never heard of him; don't remember his ever

having been in for any Scholarship; he can't be any one; oh, put him at the bottom of the third class." Besides that—oh, well, there were lots of other reasons.

So I got down my Calendar to look out my Scholarship. I selected the choicest I could find; the one that seemed to have the minimum of competition. There are a few of these more select ones still left, in spite of the Parliamentary Commissioners, but it is nothing to what it was in the good old days, when you only had to be born in a particular parish, and after doing that you got your Scholarship without any further trouble. There used to be one specially attached to the heir-apparency of the younger branch of the Rollinston family, which at present happens to be myself, left by an ancestor: the Commissioners have abolished the Scholarship, but they haven't returned the money.

My Scholarship wasn't exactly a close one, but I suppose its subjects weren't attractive enough to excite much competition; anyhow, according to the Calendar there were some years when nobody seemed to have gone in for it at all; of course, if this happened in my year, so much the better; and as for subjects, so long as they gave me occupation, what *did* they matter?

I went out next, purchased all the requisite books, came home, cut the pages, and began reading. I think I may say I read most creditably; some of my times, I believe, were among the best on record. I tried several new plans for reading. There was the continuous-note-scroll plan, con-

sisting of pasting sheets of notes end to end so as to have them all together, and more easily got at. I used to tack on an average of a yard and a half of notes every day, but it got cumbrous after a time, besides its looking odd when I trundled it to and from the University Library; so I gave it up, and resorted to the hackneyed but simpler method of note-books. Then there was the octomanal plan, by which I made eight days out of the seven. This was a grand conception. I began on Monday, and made every day last only twenty hours, thirty-four minutes, seventeen seconds, and a recurring decimal. I had it all carefully arranged on paper, and it would have worked very well for myself, but it got me so awfully mixed up with other people, that I had to abandon it as well. And I tried sitting up all night, because it seemed absurd why such a lot of time need be wasted just because it was the conventional thing to go to bed; and I didn't feel any the worse for it, though all my friends said I should. Only next night, when I tried it again, and had made everything as comfortable as possible about eight o'clock, as a sort of reward for my perseverance, and had had one final pipe before I started, and had put on my coloured spectacles, which I was beginning to find of great use to my eyes as I got accustomed to them, and had put my legs up on the sofa for one last think—though I hadn't felt a bit sleepy,—I was aroused by the lamp going out with a smell, and the fire was out, and it was very chilly; so of course there was no use doing any more work that night, and I turned into bed at 3 a.m.

But in the intervals of these experiments my work went steadily on. I got more into my head in that month than I had ever done in a year before: only the worst of it was, it all got stodged there, and it seemed very questionable if it would ever come out again. I kept well on the safe side, however, and avoided contact with my fellow-creatures as much as possible, for fear of anything being jarred out of me before the proper time. I sat chiefly athome by myself, brooding over my coming Scholarship. It was evident that Scholarships didn't agree with my habitual moral constitution: this was the first I had ever been in for, or I should have found it out before. I began to resent everything that anybody said to me, and to feel that I should derive infinite satisfaction from doing any one an injury in return for even the smallest kindness. Then I got the better for the time of these evil sentiments, and, to prevent their recurrence, wrapped myself up still closer in my Scholarship. I read harder and harder; then came a period of excitement as the time for examination drew near: the excitement grew and grew; the day arrived. I went into the ordeal with my head full of facts and all my dates at my fingers' ends; did half the paper—and collapsed!

CHAPTER II.

BECOMING INTERESTING; AND ENDING WITH DECISION.

WHAT was left of me was carted home somehow, and hung up to recover itself: then came the reaction. For myself I was pretty cheerful; now there was no more Scholarship to think of, I felt as if an immense weight was lifted off my head. I had done my duty. I had stuck to my post till I dropped, and now there was no more use bothering about it. I made a bonfire of all my notes, exchanged my books for a series of standard modern authors, and set to work at a course of them.

But though I didn't suffer much myself, my friends seemed determined to feel very bad for me, and they came around in sympathetic crowds to condole with me. And when I went down to see my people for two or three days, and they got wind of how I had been passing my time, they held a consultation, and came to the conclusion that I had been overworking myself, and must see a doctor. First I went to the family one, and he asked me all sorts of questions about myself, till I really began to feel that there was something

the matter with me, but neither he nor I could make up our minds what it was; so he sent for another medical man, and they thumped at me, and listened at me, and spied into me, and ran things into me and asked me if it hurt, and subjected me to more rigorous *vivâ voce* examinations, even going so far into petty details as to ask me how my great-uncle had died, which, as he was drowned at sea, I don't see could have helped them much; but even then they didn't seem to arrive at anything satisfactory. They remanded me for a week, and then reserved me for further consideration, till at last I had stopped so long in town that it became a touch-and-go thing whether I should keep my term or not. I went to see them seven times altogether, and I felt I was becoming a more confirmed invalid every time I came away; but at last, after they had completely satisfied themselves as to what things I best liked to eat, and what to drink, and in what ways I best liked to employ myself, they expressly forbad me at my own peril to eat or drink any of these things, or to employ myself in any of those ways; and then they gave me their blessing, and said they hoped to see me again soon, and I returned to Cambridge.

My new sort of life wasn't bad fun at first. I was on no account to do any head-work, so I lived for some time in a happy state of merely keeping my term, novel-reading, tobacco, and gossip. The diet was a little trying when I began it, but I soon got used to it, and I found it got me a great many introductions to society.

I was asked about in order to serve as a topic of conversation, and to be pitied, and to be tempted to break my rules—and I can't say but that I occasionally fell. I *was* allowed to eat fresh fruit, however, and I think I managed to get through about a moderately-sized orchard-full in the course of that term. Part of the course was the cutting off of my violent exercise, but I had never been much of a violent exercisist; and it was certainly very pleasant, spending the hot May afternoons in the stern of a boat, being sculled about by some other energetic person along the Backs or up by Paradise. The human form when exerting itself is indeed a noble object to contemplate.

* * * * * *

But Conscience came again and said: "John Rollinston, you're a humbug. You're neither working for a Scholarship nor even for your Tripos—you're becoming a regular idler."

I answered, "Conscience, you know nothing whatever about it: everyone says I'm very ill, and I've been ordered by some of the most eminent members of the medical profession not to exert myself in any way. Now, if I were to listen to you, I might do myself some severe injury, and how would you like that?" This was conclusive, and Conscience argued the point no further.

Nevertheless, I felt in myself that the life I was leading was not altogether profitable. And there was a something inside me that I always seemed to be struggling to get away from; perhaps a complete change of some sort or other would do

me good. So I went down again and told the doctors all about it.

I believed I was tolerably happy, living as I was in England, and they immediately declared that with my present health I could not do better than go abroad. I thought I dreaded the sea-passage: how about that? In their opinion a long sea-voyage was the one resource left for me. I went away and talked it over with Conscience, and we decided that as the doctors thought so, it would be best to give up Cambridge and all ideas of work for a year or so, and go away in search of travel and adventure. The next question was where to go to. I had connections in various parts of the world who could be made objects of, so that I had plenty of excuses for a long sea-voyage. It mattered little to me which I dropped in upon, and no doubt they would all be equally glad to see me. There was one in Fiji, and one in India, and two or three in the extreme west of North America, and there was one somewhere about Monte Video. Somehow Monte Video took my fancy most. So I sent off a line to say I should turn up there shortly, and immediately began to make preparations for the journey.

CHAPTER III.

MERELY FOR THE SAKE OF INFORMATION; BUT BEING ALSO SOMEWHAT SUITED FOR THE OCCASION.

I HAD known before that Monte Video was a republic, or rather the capital of one, in South America, and that it had a postage-stamp of its own, because when I was at school I used to collect postage-stamps, and I had had a Monte Videan one, probably got out of a sixpenny assorted packet. But beyond this I had a very hazy notion as to even where it was at all, and this seemed rather a scanty amount of previous acquaintance with which to set off on an expedition to a foreign country. On inquiry, however, I found most of my acquaintance were in about the same state of knowledge regarding it as I was, so there was nothing to be done but to fall back on what I could find out for myself. So first I looked it out on the map, to make sure of its position, and then I went round and got together all the books about it that I could, and took such notes as seemed necessary for immediate purposes out of them.

That enterprising man Mr. Murray does not

seem yet to have penetrated to Monte Video, and I couldn't find any correspondingly compact work that would tell me everything at once; consequently what I found was of a very miscellaneous description. From a geography book I discovered that Monte Video is chiefly productive of cattle and sheep, which are fed on the wide plains about there; and from Whitaker, that book of universal information—which I always intend to read through some day, and then I think I shall know enough to go on with for some time—I learnt it had a revenue of a certain number of millions, and an expenditure of about half as many again, not to speak of a magnificent and totally independent National Debt. Clearly Monte Video must be quite a rising place.

Another thing I picked up was that Monte Video is where the Extract of Meat comes from, and I also made an important discovery in geography, that Paysandu, the place where potted ox-tongues are grown, is in the neighbourhood. I don't exactly know why, but I had always had a sort of idea, when I ate potted ox-tongues, that Paysandu was somewhere in Normandy.

I had a general kind of impression, too, that the chief characteristics of South American republics were a revolution every week and an earthquake every other week, the two being somehow connected, and serving to counteract each other. To this I added certain notions of Pampas life and Indians, as gathered from recollections of Mayne Reid, and now I glanced

through a few books, some of which strongly advised the young emigrant to go out there, and others as strongly recommended him to do nothing of the sort; and on the combined basis of all these materials I built up my conceptions of what Monte Video ought to be.

I talked a good deal about Monte Video. At first it was successful, and I used to get a good many people into my rooms to chat over it with me. I couldn't help it. When any one asked me what I was going to do in the Long, of course I had to say I was going to Monte Video. I'm sure I tried to say it in as offhand a way as I could, but it was not so easy, and perhaps I gave a little offence by an accidental assumption of something of an air of superiority. And then there were such a lot of things that I should have liked to have done if I had stopped in England, and of course would have to be put off, so that the words "When I come back from Monte Video" had to be constantly on my lips. And besides, it would never have done to have missed any information that I might gain in the chances of conversation. But my friends began to complain of a sameness in my talk that they would rather was not continued, and they fell off a little in their visits to me. So when I had finally tried to induce them all to come out in a body to keep me company, holding out hopes to them of great openings in the Liebig or Potted Cat's-Meat (Limited) line of business, or, failing that, something in the way of my being President, should we arrive in the nick of time for a revolution, and

their being Deputy-Presidents, with all the privileges attached to my office in subsequent revolutions, and they had one and all politely but firmly declined, I kept a guard on my utterances, and when we found it absolutely necessary to allude to Monte Video, we spoke of it reverently but ambiguously, as "that place," and of the various stages of my proposed journey as "When I go, you know," and "While I'm there," or "When I come back."

Some spiteful people began to prophesy I shouldn't get there after all. I had in truth begun rather to repent, as it struck me as rather a lonely proceeding, but I felt my honour was now at stake, and there was no help for it. I had a character to keep up, and as I went down King's Parade, I was conscious that every one was turning round and looking at me, and I felt they were saying, "See how Cambridge sends her *alumni* (sons) even to the remotest quarters of the globe. That's the man who is going out to Monte Video."

When I got back to my rooms and hung up my dust coat, I found I had been leaning up against a tarred rail somewhere.

* * * * * *

But besides getting information, there were other preparations to be made: there was my outfit to be thought of; a certain amount of fortification would be advisable, in anticipation of political disturbances; and some provisions even might be necessary, in case I got beyond the region of shops. And there was not much time

to do it all in, if I wanted to catch the steamer. Term ended at last, and I went down to work hard at my equipment.

I had to go entirely on my own lights again, as, though I got plenty of friendly advice on the subject, none of those who gave it had ever been out there themselves, and it didn't seem practical enough. I wanted to get what was most commodious and at the same time most comprehensive. As for the natives' feelings, the aborigines didn't much matter, as they probably knew very little about clothes at all; it would be sufficient if I put a dash of the startling in, to awe them. But as the actual Monte Videans were of Spanish extraction, I judged it best to have a certain degree of Spanish in my costume; and I looked up the pictures in my Mayne Reids, and then sat down to design a suit.

The coat was perhaps the most remarkable part of it. It was to have been something like a Norfolk jacket, only it was longer, and was to have partaken of something of the style of a strait-waistcoat; it was to have been white, and provided with ventilators, and it was to have had countless pockets all over it, one for each of the numerous articles I proposed to carry, and notably one in front, like the pouch of a kangaroo, to carry such provisions as I might require for immediate use; and another in the tail, where my revolver would rest in safety without any danger of my twitching the trigger by mistake when I put my hands in my pockets. Then I wanted a waistcoat that would serve on an emergency as a bed, with a canopy over it to

protect me from the rays of the moon when sleeping on the Pampas; and a pair of knicker-bockers that would unfurl and let down as trousers, in case I was asked out to dinner to meet any of the native chiefs. But it would scarcely be worth while to give more than a rough sketch of what this suit ought to have been, as no amount of explanation and persuasion could get my tailor to rise to it. It was in vain that I represented to him that it was me for whom he was making the suit, and not for himself, and that if I chose to pay for it, it was for him to carry out my plans as I wanted them. He maintained, for instance, that he had never seen pockets in such extraordinary places before, and he especially animadverted on my revolver-pocket, which I had considered the masterpiece of the whole thing. It ended in his sending home the suit in a very modified form; in fact, it was very little more than an ordinary Norfolk suit, and there weren't half the pockets in it that I had ordered. However, as I saw they couldn't be introduced afterwards without slitting the suit almost to rags, and time was shortening apace, I left things as they were and contented myself with the thought that they would serve as an advertisement for his obstinacy.

My underclothing was mostly flannel, as goodness knew if there was any laundress out there capable of getting up a shirt-front to my liking. I took three pairs of boots, but the ones I chiefly depended on were my Wellingtons. They ought to have been very wide at the top, to stick things

I wanted handy in, as I gathered was the custom to do in those parts, and padded at the shins to save me against the kicks of wild horses. I heard of a man once who lost his life after many years of acute suffering from epilepsy or something, brought on by his standing too near a young colt when it was going to scratch itself, and getting kicked on the shin.

I had great difficulty in settling what sort of hat I should take, but at last I fixed on a white Vandyke sort of thing, with a brim nearly six feet in circumference at the extreme edge, that would turn up and down, so as to afford shade or not to the eyes of the wearer; also when up it would serve as a cistern to collect rain or dew in, should I be lost on the Pampas, or when down it would shoot off the water around me like a penthouse. I deliberated as to having a peacock's feather stuck in it or not, but eventually decided not, as it might get spoilt by the weather.

Then there were several minor articles wanted to complete my outfit. I got four sleeping-suits for the voyage, made of a moiré-antique chintz on the purest æsthetic principles, all of different patterns, so that, if called up hurriedly for a shipwreck, I might make a presentable appearance in the eyes of the public. I had a pair of riding-gloves, and there was a revolver to be got, and a small hunting-knife, a pocket butterfly-net, a case for botanical specimens, which might also serve for sandwiches, a note-book, a flask, a purse, a portable knife fork and spoon, an inkstand, a pen and pencil com-

bined, a pomatum pot, and other requisites for the toilette, and heaps of other things I was constantly being reminded of by seeing them in the shop windows. I asked at several places for an umbrella and campstool combined, but was told I should probably have to have one made, as it was a thing that had never been heard of before—that is, exactly as I wanted it, which rather surprised me, considering the conveniences that are always being devised for the use of travellers nowadays.

When I had all the things home, I unpacked them and attired myself in them for practice. Then amid the lofty piles of brown paper that lay strewn about the floor, I stood, exalted by all the glory of the situation. I turned towards the long glass that stood at the foot of my bed, and for the first moment was startled by the vision of a figure, the general indescribableness of which would have baffled the most lively of imaginations. I instinctively gripped tighter at the swordstick which I had purchased amongst the other items and now held in one hand, while at the same time I put my other to the pocket where I had been fain to place my revolver in lieu of the safety-pocket that my tailor had so insolently contemned. But then I remembered the true state of the case. I waxed as enthusiastic as possible under the circumstances—I must have weighed when fully arrayed at least a quarter of a ton—and striking an attitude, I exclaimed in the words of Mayne Reid, or, at any rate, very like them, "As the handsome young stranger, fully equipped for the pursuit of the wild *sombrero* of the Pampas,

caracolled on his wiry little steed, trailing his lasso"—I recollected I hadn't provided myself with a lasso: Mem., to get one—"into the court of the *haçienda*, he was aware of a pair of bright eyes——"

"Please, sir, can I come in to put your things out to dress for dinner?"

It was the housemaid. I live at the top of the house, and the man-servant, to save himself the trouble of coming upstairs, had apparently made some arrangement with her that I did not know of, that she should perform this share of his duties. I had forgotten to lock the door.

With a presence of mind worthy of one about to face the wild Indian on his native Pampas, I replied, "Oh—er—ah—yes, come in—and would you mind asking Miss Mary"—that is my sister—"if she's in her room, if she's got on her things for the fancy ball?"

CHAPTER IV.

WHICH ENDS THE BEGINNING AND GOES AHEAD.

I PACKED up, and then went to the Royal Mail Office and asked for a ticket. I said, "First return to Monte Video, please," in as near a tone as I could command to that in which I should have said, "First return to Sloane Square," at the Underground at Victoria, as if Monte Video was the sort of place I went to every week. But the clerk didn't seem half enough impressed. He replied, "Yes," in very much the same way as a clerk at the said station would have done, handed me the ticket, banged down the change, and the thing was done.

Then the only thing left to be done was to take a hasty farewell of all my relations. This was a vast undertaking, as my family is a large one, but I got through it in something under a week, at the end of which time I found myself loaded with an accumulation of last things that had been given me by various people as sure to prove useful, and of which, after vain endeavours to cram them all into the minimum of luggage I intended to take, I hid away the whole somewhere at home, so as to

show preference to no one in particular, trusting to fortune that when I returned I should not be questioned as to how far this or that thing had proved serviceable.

And at last the day came. The household rose at an unprecedented hour, breakfast was held early, my things were put into the cab, and I had said good-bye to all. It is on these occasions that one begins to be sad, and to feel how much one is going away from; one is almost tempted to throw the whole thing up, and not go at all. But we all did our best to be as cheerful as possible under the circumstances, and I was off at last.

* * * * * *

I started in an ordinary English suit, and I wore an ordinary English billycock, as I thought my more special expeditionary attire was rather beyond the grasp of more civilized minds.

The nine o'clock train saw me safely down to Southampton, then one of the few remaining links that bound me to my country was uncoupled, and we parted from the rest of the train, and were shunted to the docks, where we alighted. A man came who seemed to know all about me, asked for two shillings, pasted all the labels over my luggage that he could find room for, and wanted to put the rest on me, but I said I thought that was hardly necessary, and so, as he seemed to think they must be stuck somewhere, as he had been paid to do it, he put them about on posts and cows and other objects standing about, and then, having finished this part of his business, showed me to the landing-place, alongside which the tender was lying. There

was a little further waiting, during which I was chiefly employed in getting out of the way of one thing and into the way of another, and then I found myself shot down a slide—whether intentionally or not, I am uncertain to this day—into the tender. There was a whistle, and I was not to touch English ground again for some time.

Half an hour brought us to where the *Tagus* was lying down the river, and we crowded in through one of the holes in her side—the *Tagus* on that occasion seemed to be principally constructed of holes, one for the introduction of each separate article of her freight—and turning down a passage I found myself in the saloon. There was an enormous quantity of people there, and a general scene of bustle and confusion. I was jostled about while searching for my cabin, till at last I came in contact with a man in his shirt-sleeves, who pretended he had been looking for me all the time, and told me he was my bedroom steward, and I was to come along with him.

I obeyed, and went along with him to see the place that was to be my quarters for the next month or so. It was a very comfortable-looking sort of den, about eight feet square—the steward said it was the largest in the ship—with two berths lying transwise to the ship, one over the other, and a sofa lengthwise. There were two washing-stands, and a little shelf to put brushes and combs on, two looking-glasses, pegs here and there on the walls, and a bracket that let up and down. A bit of carpet and a campstool completed the furniture.

The steward seemed a lively sort of man, and, when he heard I was going out by myself, said he thought I was very young to do so—I do look a great deal younger than I am, I know—and instantly expressed his intention of taking the whole responsibility of me on him, and assured me that I had but to ask him for anything I might want on my way out, and he would get it for me. Then he invited me to lunch, which was spread out in the saloon, and to which every one seemed to have settled down by this time by way of filling up some of those dreary last moments that are always the worst in any parting. And it must have been satisfactory to those who were going to stay behind to be able to test the quality of the provisions that their friends were going to exist on for so long.

I took a short stroll on deck after lunch, and then went down again to the lower storey—nautically, maindeck—where I found the bustle about the cabins begun again. My cabin seemed to be rather in danger, so I kept a watch on it. First a young Spanish swell put his head in, coveted it, and went off to the purser, who was sitting being badgered at a table, and demanded it for himself and to himself, and when he was told he couldn't have it, waxed furious, and said it was disgraceful, and that he should transfer his patronage to the other line. I suppose he did; he didn't come with us any way.

Then there were an old lady and her daughter, who also put their heads in, and, having agreed it would be a nice cabin for them, also went to the purser. He thought a little, then looked about till

he saw me, and I heard him say, "I don't know, but there's the gentleman who's got it now; I dare say he'd like to give it up." I don't know if I looked it, but I didn't feel it. I mentally ejaculated, "No, hang it!" and fled before they could ask me, and studiously avoided them for the first few days of the voyage. My heart is so chivalrous when appealed to by ladies, that I very often find it more convenient not to risk it. I went on deck again, only returning every now and then to make sure of the safety of my cabin from a distance.

"Clang! clang!" went the bell. "Any more for the shore?" shouted some one. The non-voyagers disentangled themselves and went on to the tender.

"Ting! ting!" went our engine-bell. The effect of this bell, I afterwards found, can be produced by tapping the handle of a toothbrush on the edge of a basin; and when I felt homesick, I used to cheer myself by practising it.

"Let go!" We parted from the tender.

I ran up from among the crowd of men at the gangway, and looked over the side of the ship. The passengers were lining the side, each waving to some one on the tender. I instinctively lifted my hat too, once, twice, three times. There was something in that tender that I clung to, in spite of my short acquaintance with it.

"Ting! ting! ting!" went the bell more emphatically.

"Good-bye!"

CHAPTER V.

A LONGER CHAPTER, AND OF MUCH IMPRESSION.

"IN a new circle every character is a study, and every incident an adventure, and the multiplicity of the images and emotions restrains the hours. But after a few days the rapidity of time, &c." I have read this somewhere; I came across it the other day in a commonplace book I once began,—but which, alas! has shared the fate of so many of my other schemes for self-improvement,—and it struck me as peculiarly applicable to my case for the first few days on board the *Tagus*, especially the very first. That first day, now I look back upon it, seems to have occupied half the voyage.

I kept my eye on the tender as long as I could see anything of it, and then turned away from the side, and resolved to make myself as comfortable as possible under the new circumstances. First I thought I would take a look round and see what sort of people I was to be boxed up with for so long, now that they had weeded themselves out from among the crowds that were on board when I first arrived.

Most of the passengers seemed to be *habitués*, and had brought their own chairs, and now were sitting down as if they had always lived there. I hadn't got a chair, but I didn't want to look as if I had never been there before too, so I went below and fetched up my rug, and when I had arranged it in a place quite remote from any ropes or pulleys, and also somewhat retired from the public gaze, I began my observations.

The name of the gentleman nearest me was Vestry. He was the only person whose name I knew even, and as I had arrived at that much in rather an informal manner, having seen it painted in large letters on the back of his chair, I didn't feel justified in making any further advances as yet, particularly as he was at that time occupied in attending to the wants of Mrs. Vestry and his daughter. Besides, I was the youngest, so it was for him to cultivate me, and not *vice versâ*. Mrs. Vestry was not well; Miss Vestry was in short frocks, and looked just of a teasable age, which would serve as an occupation in a mild way, when I had been properly introduced. There was another family, who appeared to be allies of the Vestrys; there were two young ladies attached to this family, beyond the teasable age. Round these two families, as central constellations, hovered two minor satellites, young men, whom I put down at once as brothers. There were two elderly gentlemen, who looked like twins; three unprotected ladies; the before-mentioned old lady with her daughter; and an unmistakable bride and bridegroom. Those were all the English passengers I

could see at that moment, and I wondered what on earth could be taking out even that number to a place like Monte Video.

The English kept chiefly to the left—nautically, port—side of the deck, with the saloon skylight between them and the foreigners. This seemed an understood thing, begun at the beginning and kept up pretty well throughout the voyage, though, as we proceeded, visits were occasionally interchanged when some of our number, more bold than the rest, had primed her- or himself sufficiently with the vocabulary to make it more safe to venture into the foreign domain to converse.

There was a languid individual who looked half Englishman half Spaniard, two or three Germans, two independent Frenchmen, a Portuguese gentleman with a very lively-looking wife, and a young Portuguese student, who looked like a Nihilist; and there was another very stout Portuguese gentleman with a very large family, the whole of which turned unwell before we were out of Southampton Water. He put it in a row on chairs, and stood and contemplated it. There was also an Italian.

Here, if I liked, then, there was a regular perambulating polyglossary; supposing I mapped out my time judiciously amongst all these nationalities, say giving two hours to each, and allowed four hours for meals and digestion, and from eight to ten for sleep, the time would fly by, and I should find myself at the end of the voyage better both in mind and body—that is, if the English portion of the company didn't turn out agreeable.

I had sat still till now from motives of policy,

as my chief experiences of the sea before had consisted in going to bed directly on going on board this side of the Channel, and not getting up till time to disembark on the other; but now we were some way past the Needles, and I began to think I might almost try moving about a little without any accident. I took up my rug, and went down to my cabin, where I found my bedroom steward studying the exterior of my portmanteau, probably with a view to forming an estimate as to what was to be expected of me. I was rather tired of being silent, and as I wasn't yet on terms of conversation with those who could give it me gratuitously, I was glad to avail myself of such as I was likely to have to pay for. I hadn't much difficulty with the steward; he merely had to be started, and then it was only a matter of how long he would take to run down.

It began by my asking if he thought I should have my cabin to myself all the way. He said if nobody came on board at Cherbourg, we were not likely to take in any one else till we got to Lisbon; there might be a crush there, but he, seeing that I was no ordinary person, was resolved no one should enter my cabin save over his dead body; he intimated, however, that a small fee was usual for the same. "You see," he said, "more people go out this time than any; going out to Brazil. Make their money in Brazil, and come over to Europe to spend it, and then they go back between summer and winter, and so they get what you may call a perennial summer." Then, as if perhaps he had been promising me too much,

rather qualifying the expectations he had raised: "Leastways, I'll see you don't get a Frenchman or a Portugee. Lor! you wouldn't like any of them. Ought to be kept apart by themselves. Now there's the Brazilians—they're not so bad; they try to be like Englishmen, and they does go to the bath in the morning; but them others!" here he flourished his hand as if the mere thought of them was too much for him.

I edged in a word here of wonder at the number of people who had left the ship before we started. "Lor, yes," he said; "most of them only comes off to lunch. They pretend there's people they want to see off, and they get mixed up with the real people till there's no telling them, and so they come on and get their lunch for nothing twice a month. Now there's a gent I daresay you noticed, with a spotted neckcloth?"

I said I hadn't, but no doubt he was there.

"Oh, I should have thought you'd have seen him; with a reddish face, and rather stout; he was sitting at the table."

He seemed so vexed at my not having observed the gentleman in question, that I thought there could be no harm in saying I dared say I had seen him, though I hadn't noticed him. I asked, "Do you mean the table just opposite me at lunch?"

"Where were you sitting, sir?"

I described my position.

"No, not there; he was two tables lower down. But I knew you must have seen him. Well, now, to my certain knowledge, that gent's been pre-

tending to go to South America for the last five years—leastways he's always been to see the *Tagus* off. But of course it ain't nobody's business to interfere."

I said this was very interesting. I supposed he had been a long time in the Company's service?

If his former conversation might be compared to a piece of clockwork, it might now be better likened to a shower-bath when one has got in and pulled the string by accident. He was aged thirty-two, and he had his autobiography at his fingers' ends, from the moment he came into the world to that in which he was standing opposite me in my cabin as I sat on the edge of my berth and listened to him in awestruck wonder. He was of poor but honest parentage, had received a first-class education at a national school—he was going to get all his prize copy-books to show me, but I said it didn't matter just then. He had fought and defeated several boys while there in pitched battles, details of which he gave me, with illustrations of how it was done. He had begun at sea as bootblack on a sailing-ship, and was now gradually working his way up. At the time of the narrative he had attained the position of under-steward. I calculated that, continuing at the same rate, he ought to be a director somewhere about 1950.

But this is only a brief abstract of all he told me. It was interspersed with incidents illustrating ordinary seafaring life, most of which were of so alarming a nature, that even allowing for his evident anxiety to please, I began almost to

doubt if we could possibly reach our destination safely, and to think seriously of asking the captain to put me down at once. But just as he got to the end a bell rang for us to dress for dinner; then it struck the steward he had something else to do, and he left me.

I didn't feel very like dinner, but as I didn't know how long I might have to go without if I shirked it, I went into the saloon. All the places seemed to be engaged, as is the fashion, I afterwards found when it was too late, always on the first day; and then everyone is supposed to stick to his place for the rest of the voyage. I wandered up and down for some time, but I couldn't find any place, till at last Mr. Vestry, who seemed to be an old traveller, and as such to think it his duty to compassionate everybody who wasn't, took pity on me, and gave me advice as to what I was to do next time I came out; and then, having inquired my name, introduced me to one of the twins, who, by-the-bye, proved to be no relations at all, but only chance acquaintances who had been introduced to each other by a mutual Southampton friend, who had left them, and probably gone off chuckling and wondering how they'd get on now he had turned them loose on each other.

Mr. Farphar was this gentleman's name. We shook hands solemnly, and then he said, "I think we'd better sit here." We sat down, and then as it was my turn to say something, and I wished above all things to avoid the weather, I began: "What an unearthly hour this is for dinner."

Mr. Farphar said, rather coldly I thought, as if I had put it too forcibly, "It is rather *early*, but it is the usual time on board." . . . .

Soup. . . . .

Then I tried again, "I suppose it gets awfully hot down here when we get into the Tropics?"

"Yes, very warm." . . . .

Fish. . . . .

I tried a longer thrust at him: "This is a very fine ship; have you been round her yet? Have you seen the horses?" I had noticed some horses in my preliminary stroll on deck. Mr. Farphar was some time taking this in, and then he answered slowly and deliberately, "I haven't been to see them yet."

I followed up sharply with, "Do you know where they're going to? I pity the poor fellow they belong to."

The languid Anglo-Spaniard, who was sitting on my right, here woke up and spoke: "They are my horses."

Mr. Farphar roused himself somewhat and began quite an animated conversation with this new speaker behind my back, which rather hurt my feelings, as it looked as if he thought me not worth attending to.

The bill of fare is managed in rather a lengthy way on board these steamers. We next had two entrées one after the other, then vegetables, then a boiled joint and then a roast one; and those that didn't want boiled had to wait for those that did before they got their roast, which had to be put straight by the boiled jointists waiting for the

roastists to come up with them. Then we had currie, and then pudding, and lastly dessert. It is one of the R.M.S.P. Co.'s devices for getting through the time. . . . .

Mr. Farphar and my other neighbour being both Buenos Ayreans, had something in common, and from their conversation I began to gather that Monte Video and Buenos Ayres were in a most advanced state of civilization. I learnt of operas and balls, and parks and hothouses, and black hats and coats, and all sorts of things of that kind that startled me, as my equipment was not at all prepared for such emergencies. I listened attentively, and at last thought I had a right to get in a word, as I was sitting between them :—

"But then you have revolutions every other day out there."

"Indeed; on the contrary," said Mr. Farphar, "Buenos Ayres is in a most tranquil state. Monte Video is perhaps more liable to disturbances. A revolution is daily expected there now. But since the year —" and he gave me a brief outline of the politics of the Plate, which was very interesting, but I should have preferred it on paper.

When dinner was over at last, he proposed a walk on deck. I suppose he became suddenly aware of the fact that his conduct towards me hadn't been extremely civil—so we went up and strolled about, dropping about little driblets of conversation; but the proceedings were not on the whole what I should call a success. He got out of me that this was my first voyage to South America, and asked me a good many ques-

tions about my antecedents, commenting on my answers in a way that tended to make me feel that my life had been generally a failure, and that my birth was practically of no importance to the world at all. I began to think I was letting him know too much about me, and it was time to change the subject; besides, it was rather a heavy style of after-dinner talk. We had just passed the sheep-pens, and I said, "We've got quite a menagerie on board, haven't we?"

"Do you mean you and your friends have?"

"Oh, no. I haven't got any friends on board yet."

"I thought you were with Mr. Vestry?"

"No, not at all; it was only the merest chance I made his acquaintance. I suppose he thought I looked young, and it would be a kindness to act paternally towards me."

Mr. Farphar first propounded it as his opinion that there was no such thing as chance, and that he considered it as verging on the profane to allude to it, and then—

"But what relation is Mr. Vestry to you?"

Quite in despair, I proposed a walk round the menagerie.

"Oh, yes; what sort of menagerie is it? I wonder if it is somebody's private speculation?"

It was no use when we got to the sheep-pens and hen-coops again to explain that "menagerie" was only a *façon de parler*. Mr. Farphar was evidently vexed with me, under the impression that I was even worse than he had thought I was, and had been intending to deceive him all along.

I had to resort to argument, and asserted I was perfectly justified in talking of a menagerie, because the dictionary definition of it was "a collection of animals," and here they were. Mr. Farphar said he had a dictionary below, and would look it out.

We walked up and down some more. I determined to have a last try. I thought what subject would be most congenial, and at last hit on the speed of the ship. I didn't wish to seem as if I knew nothing about the sea, by referring to distances in "miles," and on the other hand, I didn't want to give Mr. Farphar further offence by assuming a nautical phraseology, and talking about "knots." I turned it over in my mind for some time, and at last settled to try "miles." We were both landsmen, and I shouldn't appear affected.

"I wonder how many kn—miles we're going now?"

"They are called knots at sea."

I dried up, and just then the tea-bell rang. I followed Mr. Farphar down, but I got as far away from him as possible.

Tea is another time-killing institution. After it I went on deck again, and Mr. Vestry having leisure from his family duties, came and talked to me, and we discovered that we had been at the same public school, which, though it had been at an interval of five-and-thirty years, still gave us a subject in common, and we passed a very pleasant half-hour. When he left me I measured out twenty-two yards between two points on the

deck, and resolved to walk it four hundred and eighty times every day, something of the kind being needed to keep in good health if the eating on board was always to be conducted on these lavish principles. I let myself off that night as it was getting late, and my dinner had put me rather out of condition for it.

Then I made friends with a little sailor, exactly like Dick Deadeye in "Pinafore," who was doing something with a rope's end. In such sea-faring experiences as I have had before, I have usually found it injudicious to interfere with sailors when busy; they are apt to shut one up rather abruptly; but this one didn't seem particularly absorbed in his work, and proved to be most agreeable. He asked me if I was going the whole way, said I should like the Plate very much, and then begged my pardon, but he must go and strike four bells. When he came back he volunteered me an explanation of the bell system, telling me he was quartermaster and what his duties were, all of which I attended to very carefully, in accordance with my usual habit of learning everything I can.

I told him I was going out chiefly for my health, and he immediately seized the occasion of offering to do what little he could for its promotion, which brought us to an understanding; then he begged my pardon again, but he must go on.

I loafed aft to see if there was a man at the wheel not to be talked to, but the steering at night is done from the bridge, so there wasn't. I inspected the grand-piano arrangement that holds the steering works at the stern, and got my

fingers very greasy in the process, and then went forward to look out for Cherbourg, where we were to arrive that night. I found a tall passenger there in a great-coat, whom I hadn't marked down in the afternoon. He was evidently of an inquiring turn of mind, and was standing up in the bows trying to make out the breakwater in the dark with a pair of opera-glasses. We had all the deck to ourselves, as the rest of the passengers were below; and I made friends with him on the strength of my former experiences of Cherbourg: I had come there one afternoon from Caen the year before, and left the same evening in the Weymouth boat. But I found he had read a good deal, and knew rather more about the place than I did. However, we got on to breakwaters in general, and though I am not personally acquainted with any important ones, I don't think I particularly disgraced myself.

When the anchor was finally dropped, I went below to turn in. I hadn't known that lights are turned out on the R.M.S.P. boats at eleven as regular as the old curfew, and I found every one gone to bed and everything in the dark. Luckily I made a good shot at my own cabin, and then I had to get out my things. I had to do everything by feel, and as my sister had, in the goodness of her heart, repacked for me just before I started, I hadn't the smallest idea where anything was. I spent some time trying experiments as to what I had secured, and finally stowed myself into my berth, leaving my things all over the floor, and not at all sure what I had got on.

CHAPTER VI.

ALL IN THE BAY OF BISCAY, O!

THE good ship *Tagus* was as steady as the Grosvenor Hotel when at anchor, so that I slept very soundly and experienced no very different sensations to what I generally do on land. The first intimation I had of a slight change in my mode of living was that the steward came in with some tea somewhere about six, and seemed to expect me—and rather peremptorily, too—to get up. Supposing that this was part of the discipline essential to the proper working of the ship, I sprang out of bed like the early worm when he sets forth—misguided creature!—on that last fatal expedition of his, and having completed my toilet as well as possible under the circumstances, went on deck in order to carry out my good intentions of taking a six-mile walk every day before breakfast. I won't be so uncharitable as to suppose that the steward bore me any especial grudge, and that I was the only one under his charge on whose early-rising capacities he had been experimenting; but anyhow, I was the only one who had fallen a victim to his little joke. None of the other passengers were on deck; that was perhaps so much the better, as I needn't fear feeling

ridiculous in their eyes as I paced up and down on my allotted task; but on the other hand, there was worse, which consisted of the whole of the watch squirting water about from syringes, and scraping the deck with other maritime instruments, and making the deck so sloppy and slippery that walking was quite out of the question. Getting up early is not an advisable proceeding on board ship any more than at home, where if you are seized with a sudden fit of virtue, and arrive downstairs shortly after cockcrow, you always find the housemaids in possession everywhere, and, so far from welcoming your well-meant effort with encouragement, rather on the contrary disapproving of your invasion of their secret rites. In the saloon, too, I found the stewards dusting, so at last I took refuge in my cabin and amused myself by trying to get my things a little straight again, and making rather a mess in filling my stylographic pen.

By the time this operation was over it was a quarter past eight; breakfast wasn't to be till nine; so I went up again. The Cherbourg tender had just come alongside with more passengers, a good many third-classers and one family of firsts, which latter filled up the whole of the after-part of the tender, while its luggage occupied the entire hold. I don't think I ever realized till then what Noah coming into the Ark must have been like. It came up the steps in procession thus:

Four Black Servants, Two and Two, carrying the Shawls and Umbrellas of the party;

A Butler
attended by Two Footmen carrying Bags;
A Nurse carrying the Baby,
attended by Two Lady's Maids carrying Dressing-cases;
Four Children,
Two and Two, a Male with a Female, and each carrying
a Different Musical Instrument;
A grown-up Son, a grown-up Daughter,
arm-in-arm;
A grown-up Daughter, a grown-up Son,
the same;
An Uncle and Aunt on the Maternal Side,
supported by Four Nephews and Nieces;
An Aunt and Uncle on the Paternal Side,
the same;
A Grandfather, a Grandmother,
supported by each other;
A Maltese Terrier;
MONSIEUR and MADAME,
supported by a Gold-headed Cane, and an Enormous
Bunch of Seals and Charms, which in their turn were
supported by a Friend of the Family.

When they had all come on board, the crane was rigged and their luggage was begun to be brought in.

One of the young men I had observed hovering about the Vestry party the day before, now joined me, and I broke the ice with him with a commonplace about the foreigners. It wasn't much of a commonplace—I have forgotten it now, but it served the purpose. He replied with something equally uninteresting, and the thing was done. We watched the load gradually coming on board till the breakfast-bell rang, and then went below together. I wished Mr. Farphar good-morning, and he cross-questioned me closely to see if I had been on deck, and if what I had seen of the

weather really justified the remark, and when I told him I had, and that it did, he observed that he had been watching the stairs ever since the bell rang, and he hadn't seen me come down them. Beyond this, with the exception of occasionally troubling each other for the salt and other things, we hardly talked at all.

Breakfast was another pastime of several courses, and after it we went up again. The family's luggage went on coming on board till past eleven; it included a grand piano, and, I think, though I won't positively assert, a small conservatory. We began by looking down from the ship on to the tender, but when all was finished the tender people were looking down on to us.

All the passengers appeared after breakfast, and from then till we left Cherbourg, about twelve. I passed a most profitable morning. My new friend before breakfast had been making inquiries about me so far as Mr. Vestry could tell him, and now, on the strength of information received, came to take further steps towards my acquaintance. He began by asking me if I knew So-and-So of Caius; I didn't, but I knew Thingumyjig of Trinity, and asked him if he did, too, and though he didn't, that was quite enough to close our friendship, and we cemented it with a cigar—his. I further learnt that his name was Ockern, and that he had an uncle on board, who, when I was introduced to him, proved to be the other twin. Through them I proceeded to know the young man I had thought was Ockern's brother, but was really only an old Buenos Ayrean friend of the

uncle's; his name was Archatt. Mr. Vestry introduced me to Mrs. Vestry and then to the other family, whose name was Le Trant, Mr. and Mrs., with a convoy of young ladies they were chaperoning out to their parents in South America; so by luncheon-time I was in the thick of the social system, and no longer compelled to roam about, a loose planet, by myself.

Luncheon was at half-past twelve; and then, being easy as to friends for the voyage, I followed the other passengers' example and took a little nap on the English side of the deck. I woke up about three and did a little Spanish, and stuck to it till dinner-time, at five.

At dinner I made friends in broken English with the Portuguese student over the pepper. Mr. Farphar still remained too deep for me. He did not seem interested in more general topics, and I hadn't yet discovered what his specialty was, so after six sentences about the elements, and an endeavour at an observation on the easiness of Spanish, in all of which I was snubbed, or, at any rate, ought to have been, we left each other alone.

I walked about with my Portuguese after dinner till seven, and then we went down again to tea. Then I tried to write a letter, but found that, though it seemed such a time since I had left home, there was so little to say that I abandoned it. I retired early, but didn't get to sleep till the lights were turned out. It was the first night I had been to bed when we were actually moving, and I had been told I should be disturbed by the

screw, but, on the contrary, I found it rather pleasant. There was a sense of conscious responsibility in its sound as it throbbed along, "Getalong do, getalong do, getalong do," and it gradually became fainter and fainter till I dropped off to sleep.

We had rounded Cape Ushant by next morning, and were in the Bay of Biscay. From there to Lisbon took two days, and there was a considerable roll on the whole time. Most of the ladies succumbed altogether, and did not appear again till we got into harbour; and as for the male part of the company, after having bravely faced breakfast and made its way on deck for a pipe and a walk, the major part of it eventually rolled itself up in rugs and lay in heaps about the quarter-deck for the rest of the day. I won't go so far as to say I was actually unwell, but on the first day I didn't take any keen interest in lunch, and I could have kicked the man who came and summoned me to dinner if I could have called up enough energy to do it. I was in a very bad temper all that day, especially with those four or five happy ones who would persist in obtruding themselves on our notice by trying to take their exercise up and down, in and out of our legs as we lay helpless around the ship.

I remained true to my principles, however, of making as many friends as possible *per diem*. There was an individual with a smallpoxy face, whom I had not seen before, who, in the intervals of his—and my—groaning, told me he was going to the Brazils as surveyor on a new railway out

there, and that he had several companions in the business, whom he would introduce me to next morning, if we all survived to undergo the ceremony.' Then I turned over to the other side, and there I found an elderly gentleman who didn't seem inclined to make any first advances, so I took that part of the duty on myself. I said something about "a good sea on," but he only replied by getting up and going to look, so I didn't get on very far there. Then I think I must have gone to sleep. . . . .

My faithful steward came up to look for me about seven, and insisted on carrying me off downstairs to have some tea. Mr. Farphar was there, and remarked that he hadn't seen me at dinner. I considered it very unreasonable of him not to have come and seen after me, if he was *compos* himself, when he noticed I was absent; but now I come to think calmly over it, I don't exactly see why he should. At the time, however, it only served to widen the breach that had been opening between us ever since we had first met.

After tea I felt worse again. . . . I got to bed somehow—early.

But next day I felt quite on my sea-legs again, and joined the walkers on the deck, who were now in the majority. I fell in with all the engineers, who had also recovered, and seemed a very jovial set. I also came to terms with the stout Portuguese, and the chief of the pilots whom we had on board—there were fifteen of them, all hidalgoes of the purest blood, and only reduced by family misfortunes to earning their livelihood

in this humble but honest way. They come on board at Lisbon on the homeward voyage, and find the living so pleasant, that they forget to go on shore till it is too late, and they have to be taken on to Southampton; and when a large number has collected there, they return, taking out their wages meanwhile in board and lodging; and from what I saw of them, I should say the R.M.S.P. Co. rather lost by the transaction.

The Portuguese and I only got on tolerably well, owing to our mutual ignorance of each other's language. My exercise-book only furnished me chiefly with personalities of the grossest description, such as "My aunt is young and beautiful, but thy uncle is old and ugly," and the like, and even when I did find a milder sentence, less likely to arouse the hot blood of the Southern natives, it was only, "The dog of my cousin (f.) is gentle," which, besides not being actually true, as I had personal reasons for knowing, it having bitten my finger very severely the last time I had offered it a bit of cake, would probably not be of any great interest to such new friends as these. Of course the great obstacle was that the Portuguese never understand Spanish, or pretend they don't, so my exercise-book would not have been much use anyhow. Still, partly by signs, and partly through the broken English of my student, whom we used as interpreter, we passed a very jolly time together. I could even nod familiarly to as much of the family as was not too prostrate to appreciate it. I also struck up—or perhaps it would be better to call it, kicked up—an acquaint-

ance with a coffee-merchant and a gentleman travelling in spirits in the course of my rambles about the deck.

Towards night I thought I saw the comet, and got together quite a little crowd on the strength of it. This put the finishing touch to my social schemes, by bringing me into contact with the bridegroom, the only passenger left to whom I hadn't yet spoken on some pretext or other. It served, too, to merge together some of the original cliques in which most of us had unnaturally started, and when the show was over, and it was unanimously decided that it wasn't the comet after all, we all went down to tea, talking indiscriminately to any one, as if we had known each other all our lives.

We all got to our letters again after tea, as it was necessary to send some sort of report home from Lisbon next day. I was hindered for some time by my stylograph exciting the curiosity of the Portuguese, who flocked around, and all insisted on trying it. But at last I got off, and wrote an epistle, long and full of vivid descriptions of the Bay of Biscay, my ideas as gathered from personal observation as to the probability of there being a sunken continent out there, a full description of my fellow-passengers, &c., &c. And so to bed.

I forgot to mention I began "Lothair" that day. I had bought it just before starting at Waterloo Station. I read five pages.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN I WAS TRAVELLING IN PORTUGAL.

I SAID to the steward the night before we got to Lisbon, "If you're waking, call me early, call me early, steward, dear,"—at least I didn't say "dear"; I only intimated it—"for I'd fain see all I can of Lisbon while we're stopping there;" and he said he understood me perfectly; and to show he did he repeated his old trick, only on an enlarged scale, by rousing me no less than three times between the hours of three and five to tell me we were close on the mouth of the harbour. I was deaf to his blandishments that I should get up and see the fog for some time, till at last I thought his feelings perhaps might be hurt, and I was the more influenced by his calling in the aid of the bath-man, so I rose.

I had not yet patronized the ship's bath. On the first day we had been lying off Cherbourg, and the steward had warned me against it, as he said the water would be like pea-soup, and very wisely added that though pea-soup is very nice as an article of diet, it is neither suitable nor agreeable to wash in; and on the other mornings I had been uncertain as to my capabilities of moving about

too much without consequences, and so had refrained from leaving my cabin till fully dressed; contenting myself, therefore, with turning my floor for the time into a saucer-bath, and baling spongefuls of water out of the basin. But now I felt more confident, particularly on learning we were in smooth water inside the bar, so gathering my necessaries together, I followed the bath-man, who showed me into his domain, and banged the door behind me.

I made a very important chemical discovery this morning. I always like learning something new—I don't much care in what branch of science it is—because then it doesn't matter what kind of society I drop into; even if I am not well up in what is being talked about, at any rate I can generally drag the conversation round so as to work in the one thing I may know about it, and don't have to stand looking foolish while the others are talking. When I was ready for the bath, I found the man had not put any water into the basin; I had feelings of delicacy about going out into the passage as I was to find him, so to save trouble, I dipped some salt water out of the bath into the basin, and proceeded to get up a lather. I scrubbed and scrubbed, but no lather came; the only effect was that the greater part of my epidermis began to rub off, and I threw myself into a violent state of heat that was dangerous just before a cold bath. Then I scrubbed some more, but still it was of no use; everything was there that was needed, water, soap, latherer, except the essential part, the lather. I hate seeing people making themselves ridiculous,

and there was a large looking-glass in the room; and besides, there was a cue of indignant persons now waiting outside for their turn, and hammering at the door; so at last I gave it up in despair. I thought at first it had something to do with the Lisbon water, and should have booked it as partly accounting for the peculiar habits of the people, but I asked Ockern, who I had discovered was a rising young doctor, and he said that the carboniferous properties of the silicate formation were not sufficiently aroused by contact with the zoedone contained in the alkaline solutions to produce fermentation—at least, that's what I tried to rouse Mr. Farphar with at breakfast while it was fresh in my memory; it means, I know, that with salt water ordinary soap won't wash.

When I had dressed, and gone up, I found we were just off the suburbs of Lisbon. Three Lisbonites had already come on board, who I was informed were the custom-house officers come to take care of us while in port; and something prompted me to go downstairs immediately and tell my steward to lock my cabin door.

Lisbon looks very well from the river, with the houses all white, and a tolerably consecutive range of official buildings facing the river. It is very hilly, and the houses rise one above the other, with an average of two buildings larger than the rest on the top of each eminence. I observed two things that might have been the cathedral, only I fancy there isn't one, also the king's palace, unfinished, a church at the bottom of a hill, in three sections, and seemingly a good deal out of

repair, a convent at the top of a hill, a collegiate establishment, two lesser churches, several fine private houses, and a quay. And this was Lisbon!

We cast anchor, or attached ourselves to a buoy —whichever was the way we tied ourselves up— about half-past seven, but we weren't to be let go on shore till the Douane had inspected us. I had agreed to go with Ockern and his uncle. The uncle had been to Lisbon before, and wished to stay on the ship and enjoy his cigar, but Ockern, who kept him in great order, told him off to do interpreter and *cicerone* and to make himself generally useful. Some of the passengers went away early to have breakfast on shore, but we waited till after it, so as to have all our time for sight-seeing.

My friend the pilot, who had got himself up in his Sunday best, and looked more like a monkey preparing for the church than anything else as a result, came to wish me good-bye, and so did my stout friend, who wanted to fall on my neck and kiss me. I declined, however, on the ground that my grief was already too great to support. He pressed me to come and stay for a week whenever I happened to be passing that way again, and it was with difficulty that he could be torn away from me to be stowed away into the boat before the rest of his family, so that they might be packed in after him like the smaller parcels in a portmanteau. Another harrowing scene took place with my student, who had laid aside the variegated skull-cap he had worn during the passage, and had assumed a

chimney-pot hat and his true rank. I saw it on his box—he was the Marquis of Alleluia, I think. He also invited me to come to his palace in the country. How great is the hospitality of these foreigners, I thought, as I turned away and dashed off something I felt on my nose—it was a smut from the chimney—to ask a comparative stranger, a friend, if one at all, of only a few hours' standing, to share their domestic bliss! Alas! my absent friends—this, by the way, is a sentiment of the present moment—I would even now renew our friendship by letter, but you all forgot to give me your addresses!

We hurried over our breakfast, and then accepted the purser's invitation to go on shore in his boat. I had on my best clothes, and felt I was lending dignity to the party. Ockern had put on a lawn-tennis hat of extraordinary hues, and looked like a mountebank—the uncle and I agreed to appear as much as possible not to belong to him. Besides ourselves, the Vestrys and the Le Trants came in the boat, as well as Archatt. The shore must have been nearly a mile off, and when we got there the tide was out, and there seemed no way for us to land but by swarming up a thing on the side of the quay that I believe the four banditti who were rowing us tried to palm off on us as a ladder; it consisted of two parallel pieces of wood with cross-pieces at intervals of from four to six feet loosely nailed on to it. A man looked over the edge and intimated that we might come up there; we said—that is, those of us did who could speak the language—that we didn't care if we had

to sit there till doomsday, but nothing should induce us to do so; we were British subjects, and the British flag was not to be insulted, especially if it had ladies with it; if he did not take care, we would demonstrate; so finally he went away with our manifesto to the Government, and a Cabinet Council was called, and then the matter was submitted to the Estates, who decided, after a long debate, that we might land at the Custom-house quay, which sloped down more conveniently to the water. I couldn't see when we got there why it should have been made so much a question of privilege to land upon it, as it was crowded with more ruffians of various professions, porters, fruit-sellers, guides, and other things, all more or less of an odoriferous description.

The other people went off on their own devices, and we turned to the uncle, and ordered him to conduct us to the principal objects of interest. It transpired, however, that it was a long time since he had been there, and he had no very distinct recollection of anything, on which the nephew, after giving him to understand very sharply that if he had known that he would not have put himself to the trouble of bringing him, consulted me as to which of the guides we should choose from the crowd now pestering us. We selected one that looked the least sanguinarily disposed and seemed to speak the most intelligible tongue, and told him to show us as much as he could in two hours, the time we had left us before we must be back at the ship.

First we went to the post-office to buy stamps,

and our guide posted our letters. I did not get any foreign money, nor did Ockern; we told the uncle he must change some money, and we could share the expenses afterwards. We had not time to go into the distractions of the rate of exchange yet; this was a trip purely of enjoyment, against time.

The large square in front of the quay is the Square of the Bronze Horse, or the Black Horse, or some sort of horse—at least so I gather from some incoherent notes I tried to take at the time. There are Government houses all round, and at the end opposite the quay is a large arch through which one looks right down a long street to the market-place. There is a large Bronze Black Horse, with a celebrated Portuguese adm'ral on him, in the centre. The guide pointed him out, and said he was the largest Bronze Black Horse in the world. We said "Oh!"

Then we went up the Rua d'Oro, or Street of Gold. The guide said this was the next sight, so we looked at it; it consists of nothing but jewellers' shops alternated with tobacconists'. The tobacconists dress gorgeously and display a vast amount of jewellery on their persons at their shop doors, while the jewellers sit over their work in their shops, and consume a great deal of tobacco. This arrangement is necessary to keep trade up. The guide did not tell us this; I only concluded so from my own observations.

Ockern's hat excited great attention as we went up the street, but we kept as far away from him

as we could, though I envied him privately, as it was most oppressively hot, and before I had got half-way up, I felt as if I had been doing a fast mile. The uncle consoled me by saying that it was nothing to what it could do when it tried, and I thanked him, but only hoped it wouldn't make any further attempts on my account.

We got to the market-place, which was very crowded, and the famous fruit of Lisbon was spread all over the ground in front of old women sitting under umbrellas; but either we had arrived just after the season, or just before it, or, at any rate, just out of it somehow, and I can't say I saw anything very much more magnificent there than in my own native land, and what there was at all was just as expensive, if not more so. But then we must always remember that when we pay extra for a thing abroad, that it is abroad, and we are paying for the privilege; thus, a penny for the orange and a halfpenny for being allowed to say, "Ah, but I remember buying an orange once in Portugal—," and anything else you may want to add.

The guide asked us what we next wanted to see, and when we replied that we didn't know, and that it depended entirely on him, he thought we ought to take a cab. He hailed one with a little man on the box, with a big hat of the Portuguese style, only it was studiously brushed wrong all the way round—Portuguese cab-drivers are bound by law to have their hats so, judging from what I saw of them—and we got in. The uncle took the sunny side, because he said he

liked it, while the nephew and I got as far as we could under the hood; then we started.

We had told the guide to tell the driver to drive against time, regardless of consequences, and he certainly did as he was wanted. He abandoned all idea of doing anything with the reins, but simply threw them down under his feet, and manipulated the creature between the shafts with his whip and voice. The said creature was evidently built especially for the navigation of the Lisbon streets. They are very steep and very slippery, and nothing not constructed exclusively for them could be possibly adapted to them. When we were not going up a hill like the side of a house, we were coming down one; first the uncle tumbled over on to us, and then we tumbled over on to the uncle; the guide and the driver, meanwhile, were practised, and by balancing themselves on the edge of the seat and keeping their legs off the ground like the weight on a scientific toy, managed to keep their equilibrium. At first we were a little frightened, and thought whether we hadn't better tell the man to put some check on his fiery animal, but then we recollected that he was better acquainted with the Portuguese system of driving than we were, so settled to leave him alone and not confuse him.

The panorama of the Lisbon streets passed away like a dream, the guide every now and then turning round and attempting to make himself heard through the rattle of the wheels, in explanation of the different things we were seeing, or ought to be seeing. There was an obelisk, which

the Lisbonites are building for themselves because most other capitals have got one, and the market in Egypt is used up. And why shouldn't they have an obelisk? Two or three thousand years hence, it will be as venerable as our Cleopatra's Needle. But this is an afterthought; I had no leisure for it at the time.

We saw some hanging gardens in course of construction, two theatres, and an English circus. There were not many carts or people about, so that we had not much opportunity to collide with or run over anybody; it was siesta time, too, so there were no fair damsels to smile at us from behind the window shutters. Most of the houses we passed were faced with mantelpiece tiles, which I remember thinking would be an excellent plan for London; it would save oceans of paint, and all our houses would want would be an occasional scrub down by the housemaid to keep them clean.

At last we got safely to the top of a hill, and the driver got down and rang at a bell by the side of a door that looked as if it led to a sort of fortress. The guide said this was the Water-works. We remonstrated at having been brought all this way to see waterworks; we could see them any day at Chelsea or Kingston; but the uncle, whose memory was now beginning to return to him, said it was all right, these were quite some of the correct things to see. Meanwhile the driver had been going on ringing without anything happening in consequence, and at last we began to think we must give it up, when the door opened somehow of itself, and we followed the guide up

some steps and through a yard to the main building. Here we found a man who glared at us, but after the guide had satisfied him that our intentions were honest, though eccentric, as might be seen by Ockern's hat, he admitted us into an immense hall with a great tank half full of water in the middle, under an arched roof supported by massive pillars. Ockern, who, besides everything else, was a sort of musical man, sang first one note and then another, and they went off into the roof and combined up there, and sounded very nice; then I tried, but somehow mine wouldn't amalgamate, and the result wasn't so pleasing. That is, Ockern didn't consider it so.

At the other end of the hall was a sort of oyster grotto, through which the water tumbled into the tank: we drank some, and got a strong taste of grotto. Upstairs there was a covered passage with loopholes in it, and water running along the gutter at the side, which the guide told us was the aqueduct, six miles long, running from Cintra. It was built by the Moors at the same time as the tank, many hundred years ago. We looked round a corner, and saw far down the aqueduct away into the distance, and then returned and went up some more stairs on to the roof. We had four and a half minutes of an excellent bird's-eye view of Lisbon, and came down again, and after the uncle had feed the caretaker, we came out.

The cabman had found a sunny spot round the corner, where he had curled himself up inside the cab and gone to sleep. The guide woke him up, and we reseated ourselves. What with the warm

cabman and the baking in the sun, the seat was so hot that it raised blisters all over me. But, as the uncle said, there's nothing one can't get used to: I daresay I could sit on the top of a kitchen oven after a little practice.

When the horse, who had also been asleep, had been called, we drove furiously up and down some more till we came to the École Polytechnique. There we walked through some gardens, which the guide told us with great pride were conducted on strictly English principles. We went into the conservatories, which they use here to keep the temperature down, and there we saw some sunflowers as big as tea-tables, and another bird's-eye view, and rejoined our cab.

We had now just time to go and get some fruit in the market, and then drive to the quay. But about half-way back an extremely happy thought occurred to the driver, that, as he was employed by time, he might as well stop somewhere and have his breakfast. He pulled up, or managed to stop in some way, whilst we were going down one of the precipices, and jumped off to go into a kind of *cabaret*, leaving us to the tender mercies of his animal. After waiting for some time, we sent the guide in after him, but he only stopped too, and we were about thinking of taking the reins into our own hands, and looking at each other to see who would be the bold one, when they came out, got up as if nothing had happened, and stimulated the beast on again.

We bought a large basket in the market for some fabulous price, and then went about and

gradually filled it with fruit enough to cause serious effects to last us till we next sighted land, when we hoped to get a fresh supply. I invested in a large stock of lemons, which were the only things I could see that I couldn't have got at home; they were certainly the largest I have ever seen, quite the size of an Association football. I may note here that I took to eating lemons during the next period of the voyage instead of luncheon. I acquired the art of eating a sour lemon in cold blood most satisfactorily, and to the great delight of all who knew and watched me.

We got to the quay at last, and dismissed our cabman, who wanted more than we had originally bargained for, but we turned the guide on to him, and they wrangled it out between them, to the eventual discomfiture of the cabman. Then the uncle was set on to the guide. He gave him a sovereign to go and get change while we waited. The uncle, by the way, was a strong advocate for the doctrine of mutual trust. As it proved, the man did come back, but the nephew and I were of opinion that the proceeding was rather a rash one. However, the nephew said he must allow his uncle his little whims sometimes. We joined a boatload of our passengers just as they were leaving. These were the old lady and her daughter who had wanted my cabin, the bride and bridegroom, Mr. Farphar, and two of the engineers. We had all been to different parts of the city, so by putting our experiences together we formed a sort of Co-operative Sightseeing Society. Mr. Farphar had seen two churches; the bride and

bridegroom had been to the public gardens; and the old lady and daughter to the Rolling Square; while the engineers gave us their ideas of the interior life of the Lisbonites; they had been to an hotel, had breakfast, looked at the papers, and just knocked about at billiards a bit, and then it was time to come on board again.

The deck was crowded when we got back, and though we were advertised to start at half-past one, it was quite past three when we got away. A lot of third-classers came on board to go to Brazil; it is this connection between the two countries that supports Lisbon. The third-classers required the united efforts of the whole steward staff to make them understand that the quarter-deck and the private chairs were not made for them; as fast as they were turned off one side, they ran round and came on at the other, till at last the captain threatened them with the hose, and they retired at an amazing pace.

I purchased a chair while we were waiting to start. If I had the consciousness of possessing a chair, I could have no compunctions, as I had hitherto had, as to taking some one else's; as long as there was one for everybody, it was all right; it was only when some mean persons without chairs of their own sat down that the order of things was put out. Till now I had always waited to be invited to take a seat, but now I felt I could conscientiously do so and know I was doing no harm to the community; if the proper owner of the chair I was occupying wanted to rest, he could use mine, or some third person's,

who could use mine, and so on. I must say I didn't often use my chair—it was chiefly for the moral purpose that I got it, but when I did, I don't think I ever experienced such discomfort in any seat I ever sat in before or since. It was very curiously made; the back was not straight, but inclined rather forwards, and the arms came round so as to clasp the sitter's chest, and, if he wasn't careful, injured him while he was extricating himself. The seat also sloped the wrong way, and one leg was shorter than the other; besides that, the whole was so high off the ground that it was difficult to touch the ground with one's feet. I bequeathed it to the ship's doctor at the end of the voyage as a token of friendship.

I was particularly anxious to find out which of the numerous people that had come on to the ship, as at Southampton, were going on, as the steward had thought it very probable that I might get somebody, if not two others, put into my cabin, and I went down to see him about it. He had certainly hitherto fulfilled his promise of taking a paternal interest in me, but now, when I went to him for about the fifth time in the day to see what my prospects were, he at last resented it, and turned on me rather sharply—carrying the parental prerogative a little too far, I thought. "Now look here, don't you go putting yourself in a cast-iron perspiration; if you're going to have another person in with you, you are, and if you're not, you're not." The argument was one that certainly could not be gainsaid, so I had to be content with it. However, he behaved faith

fully after all, and I was not troubled with any intruders. I am half inclined to think he was exciting my fears with a view to further intimidation, but towards the middle of the voyage I reassumed my proper relations towards him, and we never had any more passages of words together.

Then we untied ourselves, steamed slowly round and down the river, the visitors tumbling down the ladder into tenders and boats like a swarm of rats leaving the ship. Past the place where the old city stood before the earthquake, past the quarantine-station, past a village which an unattached gentleman, who must have come on at Lisbon, as I hadn't seen him before, remarked to me was very like Margate. I picked up another friend before we got to the mouth of the river, in the shape of a youth who was going out to the telegraph-station at St. Vincent, and who had been too ill to appear before now. Past the last hills at the mouth of the river, over which we just caught a glimpse of Cintra, hideously associated in my mind with the Convention and the History Tripos. I walked down by myself to the stern, and gazed at the receding shore. Past the bar, and into the open sea, and I turned, and all the other passengers turned, and looked round the quarter-deck, and we felt that now we were all in all to each other.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR LITTLE WORLD.

YES, we were all in all to each other; we couldn't have helped it even if we had wanted to, for there was no one else to be all in all to; we were all in the same boat; we must all sink or swim together. As I said, we began to realize this at once; all the possibly remaining barriers after our week's experience were uncompromisingly cut down. We formed ourselves into a miniature society, and determined to make the best of it. We put aside all our peculiarities, and only reserved the best part of us for show; we were agreeable under compulsion; we couldn't afford to be otherwise.

Now if an example of this is required, there was myself. I am not as a rule too fond of making acquaintances on short notice; it generally takes me at least a fortnight to decide whether to admit a person as a friend or not; but here there was no time to spare, and things must be taken as they come. By the time we had got to Lisbon, I had polished off all the men but one or two, and I finished them before we were out of sight of Europe; then it only remained to

cultivate the ladies, who had recovered themselves at last, and on that same evening, as we were speeding away across the Atlantic, I was, thanks to the help of the different members of the ruder sex severally attached to them, on sitting terms with them on deck.

Another family of Portuguese had joined us at Lisbon—a father with several sons, aged from ten downwards, all attired in the height of infantile fashion, in high frills and long frock-coats, whom, from motives of economy, he took second class; and there was also a young Brazilian girl, who had been to Europe for her education, and was now returning to her native land, being supposed to have completed her course. Manners, however, were apparently not included in it. Ah! she was a sweetly unsophisticated child of nature! She would talk to any one, no matter what his station of life or his nationality, with a freedom that was truly beautiful in its simplicity, but rather startling to English notions of what a young lady should be. She waited for no farce of an introduction. Not she! she spoke her thoughts freely on any subject just as they occurred to her to any person who happened to be nearest at the time. From the captain to the lowest grade of fireman amongst the crew, from the highest ranked lady to the dirtiest emigrant in the third class among the passengers, specimens of all of whom I have seen her conversing with in the most intimate fashion, all felt her at home with them at once. The English ladies were at first shocked; then, when they found she

was a Baroness in her own right, pitied her and tried to school her; but she wouldn't be schooled, and stuck to her own pretty little ways of eating with her knife and scratching her head with her fork, and other like defiances of etiquette, all the voyage. She was travelling under the supposed care of her guardian, an elderly man with an expression that was only equalled in badness by his hat, but she showed the most supreme contempt for him, cut him dead, and made her own friends, regardless of his remonstrances. Unfortunately for myself, I had to be callous to her advances for the usual reasons; perhaps, though, it was in the end fortunate, as who knows that had we understood each other, some serious consequences might not have ensued—plighted vows, enforced partings, broken hearts, &c., &c.,—or, maybe, I might at this moment have been panting under a hot Brazilian sun, the rich but gradually carbonizing planter with a host of slaves to look after, and bothering my life out?

Heigho! well, there's no use speculating as to what might have been; there wasn't, nor anything approaching it, and I am digressing.

So we organized our little world, put all our social capital into the joint-stock fund, in fact, entirely dispensed with our individuality, and became as much part of a machine as the different wheels and things in the engines. I suppose it is the same in all societies, but ours was so very small that one couldn't help noticing it.

We arranged our daily round for ourselves, and

carried it out strictly for the common weal, of course allowing such small variations as might adapt it better to the different tastes of each, provided no harm was done to the good of the whole. This, too, I believe, is usual in most societies.

At six we were called, and a cup of tea or coffee was brought us by the steward. Then some more energetic ones would get up, take their bath, dress, and go on deck to enjoy the pure air of the morning. I tried this myself two or three times, not unsuccessfully in the proceeding itself, but with very disastrous results on my temper towards midday, and I came to the conclusion that if the complete happiness of my fellow-creatures was to be consulted, it would be decidedly better to keep the sweeter part of my disposition for them later on in the day, instead of throwing it away on them at a time when it was not so much needed, when they were all feeling virtuous and happy in themselves at having turned out so early; so after about the fourth day I resisted the steward's enticements and abandoned the pernicious custom. Except on the morning we passed Teneriffe, when I was persuaded to get up on deck at something to five in a *déshabillé* state to see the Peak. Then if I had known it was going to be such an egregious swindle, I shouldn't have let myself be deprived of my beauty sleep. There was no more of a peak—at least as I had expected to see it, a sort of thing sticking straight and sharp into the air, so that any one tumbling on to the tip of it from anywhere would have spitted himself like

a fowl—than there is on the Gogs; and here I had been dragged up to see a thing for all the world like an ordinary Alp, only rather higher. It was no use my friends trying to impress me by saying it only wanted looking at from the proper angle; they couldn't provide me with that proper angle, so I refused to believe them, and went to bed again, indignant.

At nine we always breakfasted, and then started for our morning walk. Walking, I may mention in passing, was by no means so simple an operation as might seem at first sight; it was all very well to stand at one end of the deck and say to oneself, "Now, I will take a straight line down one of these planks, being careful to choose some plank that has not been already engaged by someone else, and so by an undeviating adherence to my purpose arrive at the other end without harming myself or anybody else;" when it came to putting it into practice, it proved a very different kind of thing. With a steady level surface, twenty-two good steps would have done it; but this was a completely otherwise surface. So we would set off the moment the ship got level, in the vain hope of reaching our destination before the roll came; four steps, and we felt our right leg going down and our left leg going up, or *vice versâ*, and to save ourselves we had to stagger slightly in the downward direction, inclining our bodies simultaneously at something approaching an angle of thirty degrees to the deck; two steps in that position—"it was only like walking on a Mansard roof, and nothing when you were used to it," the

irrepressible uncle remarked to me as he stood perfectly calm himself, watching my struggles to keep my equilibrium; but I had never made a practice of walking on Mansard roofs, if he had, so even that reflection didn't help me much—then if we weren't sharp in throwing ourselves entirely over to the same angle the other side, we found ourselves falling headforemost either into the railing or the chairs ranged along the saloon skylight; not to speak of the numerous perils from collisions with other people in a like unfortunate condition, or perhaps a chair breaking loose and rushing frantically about with its leg-rest flapping wildly around; and so not twenty-two, but nearer fifty, was the number of steps required to complete the distance, even if we didn't then have to terminate in a humiliating position on our hands and knees. But we were never disheartened; we only stopped a moment to rub our contusions and shout our apologies back to those whom we had passed over, and then we started back again. Of course conversation in the actual progress was impossible; if any one thought of anything he felt it was imperative that he should communicate to any other person at once, the two parties concerned had to pull up short and anchor to something while the remark was being made, so as not to endanger the limbs of any third and disinterested party; but we usually treasured up our thoughts till our walk was ended. Some of us measured our duty by time and some by distance, according to our respective ideas on the subject; but eleven o'clock

generally found us safely settled in rows along one side in our chairs—or somebody else's.

Our subject-matter for the first few days was most got out of our surroundings, the only things we had as yet in common. We had no hedges and flowers and country things to discourse of when we came in from our walk, so we had to substitute the ship's railings, and the boats hanging up, and the waves beyond. We all became very nautical. Some made the rigging, others the speed of the ship their peculiar theme. I set myself to discover the exact meaning of many sea-terms I had often heard of, but of which I had hitherto formed very wrong ideas. For instance, there was a millpond. Now the chief characteristic of a millpond, according to my notions, was that it was a sheet of water that one could use on an emergency as a looking-glass; but "as smooth as a millpond," in sailors' parlance, I now found was what I, in my ignorance, should have called "mountains high." Again, a "hurricane," according to my notions, became "a capful of wind," "great guns" a "slight breeze," and all manner of things of that sort. When we were seated at dinner with the fiddles on the table and everything careering about on its own devices, and I suggested that it was "rough," I was so pooh-poohed by every one that I quite blushed, and felt desirous of disappearing under the table myself, to join the other broken plates.

Twelve o'clock was always an eventful hour, as then the log was heaved, and the captain took the sun. We generally had the usual sweepstakes on

the first event—I never won—I always drew the number either just one behind or one in front of the proper one. Ockern organized the drawing, and he won four times—of course I don't mean to infer anything; I only mention it as an incident of the voyage. Then when that was over, we used to crawl round to look at the captain. He came out with his sextant, and the chief officer went into his cabin, and the two would behave just like a tailor and his clerk taking one's measurements for a new garment, the captain shouting out some number, and the chief officer repeating it and booking it, until they got tired of the game. Then the chief officer set the clock, and we all set our watches, and our work was over for the day.

On the Saturday after leaving Lisbon, however, we had a little additional excitement in watching the ship's company turned up for fire drill. We were alarmed by a bell being rung, and instantly there sprang from all quarters unexpected and hitherto unseen sailors, who ran about in all directions, some with hose, some with buckets, and some straight into the boats. Every man is told off to his own boat, but instinct seemed to prompt every man to go to the lifeboats, regardless of the smaller ones. There is a list down below with directions in case of fire. I studied it carefully, and settled not to abide by it. I abominate being crowded, and it seemed to me that there would be very inadequate provision for the passengers' comfort if we had to leave the ship. In my peregrinations I had discovered a

very nice life-buoy, with a very pretty flag attached to it, hanging over the side, and if anything happened, I intended to put a few sandwiches into my pocket, and tie myself to this, and take my shipwreck at my ease, at any rate.

We lunched at half-past twelve, and then read or passed the afternoon in some similar manner. After passing Teneriffe we were well into the Tropics, and most of us chose the latter course, but I contrived, nevertheless, to get some profit out of the intervals between my snoozes. I read fifty more pages of "Lothair," and got to the thirtieth exercise in my Spanish book; but then I became entangled among the verbs, and as I heard that French would get on where I was going whenever English wouldn't, and that pure Spanish such as I was learning would be of no use at all, I left off at that point, meaning to wait and pick up the language as I wanted it. Even Spanish proper wants two learnings, one to know the words, and the other to turn it into a speakable form. When one has learnt a word with an *x* in it, one has to change it into a *j*, and then the chances are the native won't understand you, as he thinks you mean a *z* or an *h*. *Ll* is pronounced *j*, and *m* like some other letter at one of the extreme ends of the alphabet; the whole thing, in short, requires some one good at cryptographs to master it. I fixed in my mind the Spanish for "How much," and the numerals, and I also learnt "*Mio Sombrero*" and "*Mia Tia*" for purposes of giving vent to my feelings when necessary, and then I shut up my books, and trusted to luck.

At five we dined. After Lisbon we had had a sort of shuffle at the different tables, and Mr. Farphar and I moved to the chief officer's table, where we were all English together. The foreign element were left to pursue their own manners and customs among themselves.

The chief officer, who presided at our table, was a Channel Island man, and his peculiarity was his patriotism. I have been to Jersey, and I liked the place very much, but I had not been aware before what a Swiss Family Robinson sort of island it was, with everything, from a white elephant to a flat-iron, growing on trees, and ready to be picked for use. But it is pleasant to hear a man stick up for his country, even if he does occasionally tell—I mean, not confine himself strictly to the niceties of veracity—about it. The chief engineer sat at our table, too, and used to regale us with choice impromptus, which he led up to carefully, and then flashed upon us with great art. I made great friends with him during the voyage, and usually paid him a visit every day. He always seemed to be at leisure when awake; I believe he was generally up most of the night. His chief daily employment seemed to consist in sitting with a large slate, making calculations whereabouts we ought to be, by means of taking the diameter of the screw, and multiplying or doing something with it by the number of turns it took in a minute; then he would come and announce the result at dinner, always, however, allowing a good margin. He boasted he could be as nearly right as the sun and the captain, if not

more so; but I must say neither of them seemed very particular as to five-and-twenty or thirty miles in their calculations. Next him were the bride and bridegroom, and next them a young lady going out as a governess to Brazil, but she didn't appear the greater part of the voyage. On our side of the table were Ockern and the uncle, then Mr. Farphar, and then myself. The only disadvantage of this arrangement to me was that all the funny stories at the top of the table had to come to me distilled through Mr. Farphar, and when it was my turn to tell one, it either had to go round his back, or through him, leaving all the point sticking on the way, so that most of the effect was lost.

Then on deck till time for tea, at half-past seven. We all became very sentimental, and I, amongst others, acquired the art of hanging over the side and talking sweet nothings very nearly to perfection. Flirtation was all in vogue with those who had a taste for it, but, for my part, I prefer something more solid, and am usually more at home among the older ladies, so I took up with Mrs. Banner, the old lady with the daughter. It was much too late for her to begin any new designs on my cabin, so I felt perfectly safe on that score, and I flatter myself I completely won her heart by the adroit manner in which I deprived her of the shawl which she was carrying down to her cabin, conveyed it upstairs again, and arranged it on my chair for her, entirely of my own accord, without waiting for any asking. Then, of course, came apologies, and she took to patronizing me

under the impression I was a well-meaning youth of some sixteen summers; sudden discovery that I was a Cambridge "man;" profuse apologies again, this time from her, and a warm friendship sprang up between us immediately. She was a very good hand at pumping, was that dear old lady, and I rather regret now that she got a good deal more out of me during those evening talks than I ought to have let her know; however, it is satisfactory to know that, after having failed to arrive at any definite conclusion as to my prospects in the world, she at last settled that I must be a genius: it must always be such a consolation to people who have erratic minds with no power of application, either temporarily or not, that they, though perhaps they mayn't know it themselves, must be geniuses.

I usually went on deck the last thing at night to get cool after the heat of the day. There I would find the uncle, who, having made out that I was travelling for my health, took great interest in me, seeing in me a possible vile corpse on which to experiment with an infallible process he had invented to ensure a perfect state of health without change of air, diet, or manner of living. The main points in it were a simple costume of a wet blanket in all weathers, and food to be helped down with a peculiar kind of biscuit, a specimen of which he produced from his pocket and wanted me to taste. He told me that whatever the emergencies of travel might compel him to leave behind, he always took a supply of these biscuits. They were of the consistency of a well-rolled gravel walk, and made

of much the same material. Their chief virtue lay in their durability—one biscuit would last a lifetime. I nearly broke my teeth over mine, and then put it away till I could get some dynamite or a pickaxe. About ten o'clock the nephew usually came up and dispersed us, and when the uncle had gone below, warned me against his pernicious doctrines. And then I went to bed, to be lulled to sleep by that dear old monotonous screw, "Getalong do, getalong do, geta—long—do." . . .

On Sunday the sailors all put on their best clothes, and mustered on the quarter-deck, when they stood in a row for the captain to walk up and down to inspect them. We also inspected them in an amateur sort of way, as if they were so many waxworks; and I must testify to the fortitude of the British R.M.S.P. sailor, that they bore this trying ordeal without a flinch. What they said of us afterwards in the forecastle, I don't know. They all looked very neat and very uncomfortable in their boots, and after service, to which they went down after the inspection, the saloon smelt powerfully of soft soap for fully a week.

Service was read by the captain, and the lessons by the purser, and with the exception of a very trying genealogy, which fell to the lot of the latter, the whole was conducted without a hitch. And then we all came up again, and spent the rest of Sunday in much the ordinary land way, either at perfect rest, or in walking up and down, as if the deck was the Row, exchanging civilities.

And so we went on, self-satisfied with ourselves

and ours. What cared we for the turmoils of the rest of the globe beyond our bulwarks? England might have been at war with the whole of Europe; Ireland might have broken loose from the tyrant chain of the Saxon; Mr. Gladstone might have chopped down any amount of trees, and had another extra policeman told off for him; but we knew nothing of it; and while we could eat, drink, and sleep, and the old *Tagus* would safely plod on through the waste of waters gradually bearing us to our destination, we were happy.

CHAPTER IX.

ENGLAND *VERSUS* ST. VINCENT.

BUT a feeling sprung up in the more restless among us that some variety in our life would not be unacceptable, and it spread generally. Particularly did we feel the want of exercise. We tried to lessen the monotony of our morning constitutional by changing from one side of the deck to the other, or by lengthening or shortening our distance, or by sometimes going right round the ship and looking in on the animals in their pens as we passed, so as to give a slightly stronger tinge of rurality to the performance; but even these little devices failed, and we couldn't help realizing that the idea that we were enjoying our walk was a mere delusion; some of the more openly discontented began indeed to leave it off altogether, while those who persevered did it more after the manner of the convict on the treadmill or round and round the prescribed circle in the prison yard. What we wanted most was a good unrestrained run over some softer material than the quarter-deck. I don't mean to say that we were not just as polite and sociable to each other as before; if anything, the common tie was rather

strengthened by the additional link of the general craving; but if we had been before passively agreeable, now we longed to be more actively so.

A movement was set on foot to provide entertainment for the company. Mr. Elborough, the spirit gentleman, was the first to distinguish himself in this line. He routed out a small air-pistol from his luggage, and proposed a rifle contest. A target was set up, ingeniously arranged so that if the dart missed its mark, the shooter would have the satisfaction of knowing he had at least not shot for nothing, but had possibly injured a Portuguese on the other side of the skylight, and then we enjoyed a most exhilarating competition, ladies against gentlemen, married against single, and ladies alone. The most exciting part about it was when the gun took to going off by itself and lodging the dart in tender parts of the marker—that was me. We all felt Mr. Elborough deserved our heartfelt thanks, and gave them to him; then other self-sacrificing spirits set their brains to work to follow his noble example.

But before any one could hit on anything, Mr. Elborough was again to the fore. We were coming to St. Vincent, where the old hands said we must all go on shore, as the decks would be unbearable while the coaling was going on. Mr. Elborough recollected there was a cricket club there, which he suggested we should challenge to play on its own ground, mentioning, possibly as a further inducement to our doing so, that the St. Vincent club was always only too glad to play

any one, no matter how bad they were. But in our case it was surprising what an amount of cricketing talent we suddenly found we had on board; chance seemed, from the talk over the tea-table that night, to have brought together a collection of heroes of the bat and ball whose combined forces could have stood against any eleven, gentlemen or professionals, or both combined, picked from the arch-players of the world. The aggregate number of runs made by us during our joint lifetimes came to several hundreds of thousands, while the surprising bowling averages we had achieved were such as have never been chronicled in the annals of Lillywhite.

We lost no time in forming a Cricket Club; everybody joined; there was no subscription, which was a great aid to the enrolment of members; and then the only difficulty remaining was, that as the laws of cricket unfortunately require that in a first-class match only eleven can play on a side, which of us were to be selected? Mr. Elborough was selected captain, in consideration of his having been the originator of the scheme, though, to tell the truth, in the excitement of the moment, we had almost forgotten the fact; but for the rest, as none of us knew which really were worse than themselves, the only thing to be done seemed to be to put all the names into a hat, and draw. The names that first came out were Mr. Le Trant, Archatt, Ockern, the uncle, Mr. Vestry, two engineers, the bridegroom, the coffee-merchant, and myself. Some little dissatisfaction being shown at this result, we all

generously offered to cede our chances: Mr. Vestry said he was past his cricketing time, the engineers said they had too much business to think about, and would prefer looking on, the bridegroom thought he oughtn't to leave his wife alone on a savage shore, &c., &c., until finally a new selection had to be made; the anxiety now seeming to have set in towards the other extreme, namely, to back out of it.

The eleven now were: Mr. Elborough, *ex officio* as before; Ockern, Archatt, and myself, as being young; Mr. Le Trant, who was a genuine enthusiast; the coffee-merchant, because he said he hadn't handled a bat for years, and was very keen on seeing if he had entirely forgotten how to play; two fresh engineers, who said they might as well; and then someone remembered there were two second-classers who had played as professionals for their respective counties, so we put them in as emergencies. The last place was filled up, just in time to save the scheme from collapsing for want of a complete eleven, by Mr. Farphar. We spent the rest of the evening in the after-gangway, smoking and talking of breaks and twists and lobs, and such-like things, and adjourned to bed something after twelve.

We got to St. Vincent early next day. I made a thumbnail sketch of the harbour through my porthole, but it was not a finished sketch at the time, and I have not yet succeeded in finding an artist who can put it into a fit form for publication, or I would have introduced it here. The main feature of the landscape is a mountain up behind,

which is supposed to be like Washington, but beyond the fact of there being excrescences on it like a mouth, nose, and chin, which I presume Washington had in common with most people, I don't see why it should be consecrated to him any more than any one else.

I found Mr. Elborough when I went up on deck; he had been up with the first crow of the early forecastle cock, and was all ready to receive the coaling agent, who came off with a large body of other St. Vincent residents to board the ship on her first arrival. This is one of the few occupations open to those whose fortunes are cast on that island. Our challenge was at once accepted, so we went in a body to the captain and demanded earlier breakfast, so as to give us more time for our innings, but he refused. We were firm, but he was firmer, and said that the company's rules could not be violated for a band of mere pleasure-seekers. Then we promised not to tell of him, and he professed indignation at the idea of our attempting to tamper with him. We threatened mutiny, and to abandon the ship in a mass if our demands were not complied with. He said we were perfectly welcome to do so if we liked, but he thought victuals were rather scarce in St. Vincent, so we came to the conclusion we wouldn't, and waited.

We amused ourselves in the interval watching the boys who had come off to dive for money that we threw down. This is the chief source of revenue of the State of St. Vincent. The natives dive till they are sixteen or so, and then retire on

their fortunes and get drunk for the rest of their lives. They will not stoop to copper; they have, I believe, been known to accept gold, but threepenny and sixpenny bits are what they chiefly expect. When we resumed our journey, there wasn't a sixpence or threepenny bit to be had on board. I tried a penny wrapped in tinfoil, but it didn't answer; they were educated up to that trick. Some of them go under the ship, for which the charge is a florin. Their garments being of a nondescript sort, they keep their money in their mouths, and you can estimate the prosperity of a St. Vincentese diver, like that of a Stock Exchange man, by the rotundity of his cheeks. They are quite regardless of the sharks; it is said that the sharks don't like them, and have given up trying them. It is very rarely that a young and inexperienced shark tastes one, and then he is generally content with the first leg or arm.

We started for the shore after breakfast in two detachments; the whole of our company—those that weren't actually going to play—being told off as coat-holders, scorers, umpires, applauders, and all that sort of apparatus that was wanted to make it look like the real thing. The ladies also turned out in full force, in such bright things in the way of ribbons and parasols as they could forage out from their cabin luggage, so we had as good materials for a miniature Lord's as we could well want.

Our boat was very full, almost to the water's edge, and was manned by three stout rowers, two against one, and there being no rudder, she took

a somewhat erratic course, occasionally giving most suggestive lurches whenever bow, whose first effort as a rowist this seemed to be, caught a crab —on an average about every second stroke. Mr. Vestry was bursting to tell us a lively story that the consul had told him at breakfast, of a boat which only the day before had upset with thirteen people, only two of whom had managed to get the more important parts of themselves on shore, owing to there luckily chancing to be only eleven sharks about at the time. We appreciated that anecdote, and cordially thanked Mr. Vestry when it was finished. Then we held on tight and looked at each other, and a strange solemnity came over us.

We displayed considerable alacrity in getting out on to the pier when we reached it. There was not much time to spend over the sights if we wanted to play, so we went straight to the cricket-ground. However, to get there we had to pass through the whole extent of the capital, so as it happened we were able to take most of the sights on the way. The principal buildings are the coaling office and the telegraph-station; there is one shop where everything can be ordered and some things occasionally obtained; and there is a sort of building that might have been erected as the seat of government, but as the politics of the country are still undeveloped, it is as yet unopened, and remains with boards in the windows, and all very much out of repair.

We went through the Grand Square, in the middle of which there is a stand intended for the

use of any musical troupe that may chance to look in on passing: there is no native musical talent yet at St. Vincent. We did not see the town pump; there isn't one; the requirements of the natives do not go so far as to require it. We passed down High Street, and so out on to the plain where the match was to take place.

There is no grass at St. Vincent. The only verdure at all is represented by one tree, which is the pride of and an object of anxious care to the whole population; it is situated somewhere near the town, but we hadn't time to go and see it. The plain on which we were to play was a broad slip of sand about two acres square, lying between the capital and some outlying buildings; probably the fashionable suburb from its position, though there was nothing else to justify the hypothesis.

We found that it is the custom of the St. Vincent club to lay their pitch on a strip of cocoa-nut matting. They assured us that it is very nice to play on, much nicer, in fact, than grass, and we said we quite believed them, only we stipulated that it was to be an understood thing that we had never played on cocoa-nut matting before. The said matting was not yet ready, so meanwhile we had a little preliminary practice with a native cricket club that was already occupying the ground. It was gratifying to the English mind to see how the influence of the great national game had extended even to these remote parts of the earth. The younger St. Vincentese, to while away the intervals of their special business

of diving, have organized a cricket club, of which the plant indeed is primitive, but the spirit is true. Two capstan-bars cut short and shod with iron serve them for bats, and their ball is of wood, apparently of amateur manufacture, not round, but ingeniously constructed, with a bias that is calculated to call forth all the head-bowling of the great professional to get it anything like near the wicket. The club uniform is hardly settled; it is chiefly designed on the basis of three shirts between the whole of the club, some wearing the fronts and some the backs, while the tails and sleeves are distributed among the rest. No strict regulations have been made as to the method of wearing this uniform, but it was put on according to fancy.

But they were perfectly well up in the rules, and readily admitted us to their game. Ockern took one of the hitting-things, and a native went in opposite him; Archatt bowled one down to him, but the bias took the ball off somewhere at right angles, half-way down the pitch. The native expressed a desire to Ockern to run, and started; Archatt shouted out in his best English, "Now, then, quick up with it!" The fielder was a native; he didn't understand the words, but he did the gestures; the freemasonry of cricket triumphed over the perspicuities of language, and Ockern was put down.

But now the English club appeared with the pitch and other implements in a box, and we immediately entered on the more serious business of the day. Mr. Elborough searched through his

pockets, but found he had left his tossing coin behind in England, so we had to abide by the decision of that of our adversaries, and field out first.

The ladies were accommodated with as many chairs, boxes, tubs, and other things in the way of seats as could be mustered from the suburb; Mr. Vestry borrowed a variegated parasol, and consented to officiate as umpire; the scorers, of whom there were about six in all, besides the legitimate and authorized ones, took their places; and the rest of the company distributed themselves about and made as much of themselves as possible in attitudes as criticizers; we went to our posts; and so, the *tout ensemble* being picturesquely arranged, the game began.

I am no bowler, not much of a field, and a very uncertain catch; I have a way of getting the sun in my eyes, which makes me less effective in this last respect than is desirable in a perfect cricketer. My place when at home among those who know me is a wide stretch of toleration at square-leg, but on this occasion I was posted at long-off, with orders to go to long-leg at the over. I didn't mind this—I was rather proud of myself than otherwise—as long as the hitting continued as at first, confined to the more inlying fields, and I was beginning to think I might spare a little attention to observing the surroundings, and had almost forgotten the game altogether, when the captain of the other side came in, and then I found that one can have too much of a good thing, even of a post of honour like this. The captain's forte seemed to be hitting to long-off when the bowling

was at my end, and to long-leg when it wasn't; the sun was extremely hot, and he hit very hard; the sand was very difficult to start running on; so that with all these combined I got a good deal more than I considered my fair share of the work. Besides, the natives had now assembled in full force, having finished their work and turned out for a little recreation, and there being as usual no policeman within call, there was nothing to prevent them strolling about amongst the players in the most casual manner, gathering in little groups round the fielders for purposes of philosophical inspection, and refusing to move for any circumstances under a shilling, not to speak of their driving strange beasts that might have been meant for cows, but were more like crosses between sheep and mules, between the wickets, perfectly callous to our feelings or to the danger they themselves incurred from the ball.

The St. Vincent captain's style was effective, if not absolutely scientific. Three times in succession he hit into the suburb, and nearly demolished some of its principal buildings, creating some consternation amongst its inhabitants. After a time, however, I found that by judiciously allowing the ball to get sufficient start of me to leave me no hope of getting it before it reached where the ropes ought to have been, I lost no credit, and saved myself a good deal of running. Ockern and one of the second-classers bowled for us all the time, and both of them did wonders, though they afterwards said they never wished to have to resort to such a novel style of

bowling again. Our fielding was all that could be expected; Archatt particularly distinguished himself by a combination of acrobatism with his cricket that lent a pleasing variety to the usual routine motions of the game. Mr. Le Trant made two very brilliant catches; they came straight at him, and he stood up to them without a budge. He apologized, however, in the most gallant fashion to his victims on the ground that they were pure accidents. Of course, being visitors, we all wanted to leave as good an impression behind us as possible. Their captain, however, was the only man we had any real trouble with, and he was not out at last. Then we lost no time in going in.

And we occupied no very protracted period in getting out again. Whether it was that the ball twisted, or broke, or shot, or whether it was that the sun was too hot overhead, or the matting too slippery underneath, or that the bats were sprung, or, as some supposed, that we were bilious, the fact remains that the display of the greater part of us consisted in putting on pads and gloves, walking to the wicket, taking block with great ceremony, having one ball bowled in our direction, and returning again to the place whence we had come. Our only hope lay in the ship's gun firing for us to return in time to make it a drawn match, but even that failed us, and the whole of us were out for a trifle under half our adversaries' total. I had modestly waived my right of going in before the last wicket but one down—I had been

much pressed—would I *really* not mind? No, I certainly would not mind, and now I was rewarded by carrying out my bat triumphantly without having had a ball. Nobody knew what I might have done if I hadn't been so unselfish.

CHAPTER X.

ALL AT SEA AGAIN, AND A BREAK IN THE JOURNEY.

WE returned on board all in rather a collapsed state, and most of us retired for the rest of the afternoon. I got hold of a pack of cards and sat in the bath some time playing patience till I got rather cooler, and then borrowed a book from Mr. Farphar "On the Connection of the Trade Winds with the Recent Changes in the Monetary System of Europe,"—a subject which I had ascertained from Mr. Vestry was Mr. Farphar's great hobby, and in which I displayed a great interest when in his company, so as at least to leave no stone unturned by which to win his affection,—and went down to my berth to study it. I had a very comfortable snooze, and then I returned the book to its author.

But our spirits had now received a good fillip, and we did not intend to relapse into our old state of inactivity. Of course we had a Whist Club; I went the round of that Whist Club in the course of the voyage, but I never found the same set would play with me twice. It was evident, however, that amongst such a party as ours there must be some intellect, however latent, and we

set our social machine in motion to institute a Debating Society. The election of officers took place that same evening; everybody was made an officer; I was made Treasurer, but as there was nothing to treasure, the society did not incur any risk; and the first debate was held on the first night after tea. It was on Diet; Ockern opened, and fulminated such telling arguments against the use of every sort of food, from the pernicious salmagundi to the innocent dry toast, that we began to have doubts if it would be safe to live at all. Nobody but the opener spoke more than ten words, except Mr. Le Trant, who was President, and owing to someone having in a fit of abstraction illustrated his notes with sketches of Ockern's various poses during his speech, they were rather entangled, and by consequence so were his sentiments. Still, we adjourned very well satisfied with ourselves, and agreed that by the end of the voyage we ought to have a large budget of remedies for various national abuses ready to send home by the next mail. Unfortunately, however, somehow the debates degenerated into meetings in the after-gangway, and only so far followed the precedent of many of the other great assemblies of the world in that it partook considerably of the nature of a bear-garden, the chief things discussed being whisky and tobacco. I must say, however, that I heard some of the best yarns I ever met with during those meetings, and they were an excellent substitute for a club, like the House of Commons, and there was no *clôture*.

And now, too, we set up two other excitements of a more permanent kind. The first was our Paper. We were more reconciled to our lot now, but still there seemed to be some inexplicable blank in our existence, and we puzzled ourselves to think what it could be. At last it struck someone that what we wanted to make life perfect was a newspaper. No true Englishman can do without his newspaper; put him on a desert island, and he will immediately set up a journal, write it, publish it, and read it from beginning to end.

The first number of the *Tagus Gazette* appeared two days after the idea was mooted, and there was immediately a great run upon it. The staff was small; it consisted of Ockern and Archatt, and myself, because every one else professed to be ignorant of the use of the stylographic pen, which, as the journal had necessarily to be entirely in manuscript, proved eminently serviceable for the occasion; and, besides, my recent arrival from an University education, marked me down as distinctly fitted for the post of compiler and copyist of everybody else's literary scintillations. The rest of our plant comprised as many large sheets of paper as we could muster, and we called the chief engineer into our confidence, and got a saucerful of black lead, which we took to my cabin, and proceeded to manufacture a piece of tracing-paper to produce a second copy.

My cabin had been chosen as the editor's office, because I was told I wouldn't mind, would I? and it was the largest in the ship, and so awfully convenient for anything of that sort. It

had, by the way, long before this assumed a very homely appearance, for besides the general untidiness of note-books and diaries and other great works, such as "Lothair," lying about, that is so characteristic of a true literary genius, all my clothes had gradually got unpacked, and hung up in festoons round, so as to make it look like a small suburban drying-ground. It was, perhaps, as well that I had it all to myself. I found that there was, luckily, rather a prejudice among the experienced ones against this cabin in spite of its size, on account of its being next the scullery, and though I did not myself experience the slightest inconvenience from that, owing to my sleeping too soundly to be in any way disturbed by the stewards' evolutions with the plates in the early dawn, I thought it best to affect a certain tone of discontent about it, so as to keep off any chance of an intrusion by some Ahab into my vineyard. Our present operations with the black lead now ended in our all assuming a very grimy appearance, and effecting a worse disarrangement in black and white about the walls and floor than had already been caused by my previous attempts to pump ink into the pen.

The *Tagus Gazette* was only a four-page paper, but it was a very comprehensive one. Its title in full was, "The Tagus Gazette, or Ship's Companion: an Ecstatic Magazine of Official, Political, Philosophical, Geometrical, Poetical, Critical, Social, Sporting, Meteorological, and General Information (Limited)," so that we were not tied down to any particular line, though, of course, the

General Information predominated. We called it Ecstatic with the same view; and in the end it was lucky we did so, as, though in the excess of our original energy we conceived the plan of issuing it every alternate day throughout the voyage, it fell out that owing to rough weather, the gradual decrease of enthusiasm on the part of the editors, the touching frequently at ports after reaching the other side, and various other reasons, we only produced six numbers in all. We generally had some official news—that was, the ship's run, &c., and there was always a leader on some of the more pressing—to us in our lone situation—topics of the day, such as the Beneficent Effects of the *Dolce-far-niente*, the Inconsistencies of Deck-Chairs, the Vagaries of the numerous Infants we had on board, after the manner of the *Times* or *Daily Telegraph;* and then there was a column or so of "The Man at the Wheel," in the paragraphic style of the *World.* We began a novelette as in the *Graphic*, but that fell through for want of a plot; and we had a couple of prize acrostics in our first number, but unfortunately we forgot to put the answers in the subsequent issues, and they remain unravelled to this day. Then there usually was some account of the doings on board since the last publication, combining the styles of the *Court Journal* and the *Field*, according as they were more sporting or fashionable, and once or twice we had some Letters to the Editor, which we wrote ourselves to fill up space. The rest of the paper was occupied by advertisements, and scraps as in the *Sporting*

Times, only, of course, more adapted to the drawing-room, and the whole had a *soupçon* of *Punch* about it, as it positively reeked with jokes more or less intelligible, and occasionally plunged into the most withering sarcasm when we thought any abuse seemed to want it. The great preservative of the paper's character of an excitement in spite of its sinking into a habitual part of our life, was that it was a constant source of anxious anticipation as to whose toes in particular it was going to tread on next. And in the end, after it had served its purpose, it died a natural death, singing its funereal chant, like a dying swan, in a double number, two days before we got to Monte Video.

But to continue more consecutively as events happened. After we had settled down to the *Tagus Gazette*, we were looking about for something else to think of, and the second permanent excitement turned up in the shape of Me. I put it with a big M, as I regard the transaction entirely as a public one. I don't in the least wish to swagger about it, but I was forced into prominence like Byron, so there is no help but to mention it. I had set off on my travels in a great measure—in fact, in by far the largest part of the measure—to shake myself free of doctors. I had so far had occasion to congratulate myself on my success, and had avoided the ship's doctor on principle, although he, no doubt from purely sociable reasons, had once or twice tried to open an acquaintance with me. Ockern I was rather doubtful about; but I was well in with him before I was aware he was a doctor, so I had to take the

risk of him. Besides, as he wasn't travelling professionally, but only going out to visit his people after an absence of seventeen years, I didn't see that I could incur very much danger. But now my Nemesis, which I suppose had been dogging me all this time across the ocean, overtook me. That fatal evening, while I was setting opposite Mr. Vestry, talking to him of his many adventures in all parts of the world, he got down off his deck-chair; somehow his leg got mixed up with mine, and removed a large portion of my shin.

I didn't find it out at first, but presently the chlorine, or whatever it is hangs about in the sea air, began to act upon the place, and I was conscious that it was hurting. I went down to my cabin, but it was beyond sticking-plaster, and I bit my lips as I saw that I must after all come in contact with the doctor. I summoned my steward, who also examined me critically, and expressed his opinion that the limb would have to come off at once; and then he went to fetch the doctor.

The doctor was just then engaged in a rubber, and was not particularly pleased at first at being called away, but when he saw me his face brightened, as he perceived he had in me a really good opportunity. He fetched in all his instruments, and tried a little of each of them on me. Wouldn't believe I had done it all at once, and eventually resolved to insert a lot of silver wire into me, considerably increasing my intrinsic value, but hurting me a good deal thereby. Then he put me to bed. He complimented me very much on my fortitude under his hands: he didn't know

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that this sort of thing was getting quite the normal state for me to be in. I began to feel rather faint, so he sent the steward for sixpennyworth of brandy, which is a thing I am not used to. I told him I was drinking it under protest, and on his sole responsibility, and put the glass to my lips. It went down, and immediately I seemed to see forty doctors and forty stewards waving confusedly around, and brandishing instruments and foot-tubs and bandages about me, and I remembered nothing more.

CHAPTER XI.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY.

I WOKE next morning, and thought for some little time, and eventually settled I had got a bad headache, so turned over and went to sleep again till past midday. Then my steward brought me some sustenance, which the thoughtful man had been keeping hot for me ever since breakfast, and Ockern looked in and reported the whole of the up-above company as in an intense state of anxiety about me. I was pleased to be able to be of some use, so I sent them my love, and then set about another *Tagus Gazette,* which Ockern thought would be a nice single-handed employment for me.

I positively refused to stop below more than one day, as the doctor wanted me to do, as, though I might have been sent to sea to be improved by the voyage, like a cask of wine, I didn't see that the simile need be pushed so far as to keep me down below all the voyage ; so I got my steward to carry me upstairs next day, and lay me out decently on the very best deck-chair that my sympathizing friends could provide for me.

Invaliding on board ship is rather a pleasant

process than otherwise. I struggled against my fate for a little time, but then resigned myself to it. I was never of that gloriously independent nature as to scorn to let anybody do anything for me when I couldn't do it half so well myself, and at last I became reconciled to the indisputable fact that the world is divided into two great bodies, those that pity, and those that are pitied, and that it was for me to range myself on the side of the latter. I had now found my true vocation in life, and by fulfilling it, was taking my proper place in the ship's society.

All the ladies came and sat with me. It was quite nice to see us, myself in the middle and a large circle of them all round me taking turns to comfort me. Miss Banner brought me pieces of sugar-cane, of which she had laid in a stock at St. Vincent, to taste, which of course I thanked her for; but, seeing that such luxuries were contrary to my regimen, I really had to beg that she would not bring any more. Sugar-cane in its natural state is very like a piece of deck-rail to chew. Little Miss Vestry came and played go-bang, and old maid, and beggar-my-neighbour, and other games of the same innocent nature with me. Mrs. Banner played chess and draughts, but I soon tired of that, as she always beat me: her intellect didn't seem to have been affected by the heat as mine was. The ruder sex exhibited its pity in a more selfish manner by making me into a form of exercise, as if I were a pair of Indian clubs or a French dumb-bell, specially invented for them to carry up and downstairs.

But I infinitely preferred the assistance of the little quartermaster, my friend of the first night, who, though quite a head smaller than myself, manipulated me much more neatly, and as easily as if I were a baby, while the amateurs always wanted to experiment on me with new ways of balancing, which were very good in theory, but rather dangerous in practice. After the first week or so, the ship's carpenter contrived a crutch for me out of an old broomstick and a block of wood, but it had no spring, and nearly put my shoulder out of joint; besides which, I never got quite into the right way of using it, and always managed to get the wrong leg off the ground when I had got the crutch on it; but it was a vast improvement on the other means of conveyance. The doctor didn't approve of the crutch at all, as he much preferred my lying helpless at the mercy of others. After I had procured it, he spent most of his time leaning against the bulwark and keeping his eye on me; and I had to seize such opportunities as occurred when he happened to be called away, if I wanted to slip downstairs, and then, if I met him there, I had to pretend I hadn't moved at all, but was only an optical delusion.

Even the foreigners took an interest in me. The friend of the Brazilian family came and talked to me in French every morning, which I enjoyed very much for the first half-hour or so, but after that my vocabulary would begin to fail, and we used to get into such frightful tangles that I was quite glad for him to go away at last. The young Brazilian Baroness used to come too, but we

never got further than "Good morning," and "How are you?" on her part, and "Rather better, thank you," on mine, and even that had to be through the interpretation of Mrs. Vestry. It is in these cases that one feels the inconveniences entailed on us by our forefathers' misbehaviour at Babel.

Then there were the children. They came round me in shoals every day; it were charitable to say they did it for sympathy, but I am privately of opinion that they were drawn to me far more by motives of curiosity, and perhaps partly by the bits of sugar-cane. I had ample opportunity for the study of child-life, and I came to some entirely—to myself—novel conclusions about them. I had always imagined I had been fond of children. I had supposed I had loved to have their merry prattle constantly ringing in my ears, lighting up the surrounding gloom of life, as it were, like the cheerful buzz of the lithely grasshopper. I had loved to mark them, as, engaged in their careless play, they prepared their little limbs for the sterner struggles of their after-life. I had thought that I had some experience in these matters. I had several small brothers and sisters of my own, and juvenile cousins, amongst the latter of whom one very precious one, whose like, I was prepared to maintain at the request of its proud young mother, an aunt rather younger than myself, never existed before; and taking it all in all, I was fairly amicably disposed—that is, I had no rooted antipathy to children that I knew of—in fact, I could tolerate them—in their right place.

But now circumstances had shown me that this estimation of my own opinions must be numbered among the many instances of my being forced to awaken to the painful consciousness that I had been labouring under a mistake. I had rather rejoiced than otherwise at the beginning of the voyage to see that there were some children on the ship, remembering the model little circle I had left at home, and as they in no way interfered with my comfort during the first few days, I had not grieved when we took in a further instalment at Lisbon, thinking, alas, in the innocence of my heart, that some relief from the tedium of the voyage might be found in a little practical exercise of my ideas how children should be treated.

But I had not been aware what child-nature can do when released from the ordinary restrictions of its nursery. I had not counted on the chances of the infant recovering from its first sea-sickness before its habitual overseer, and being permitted to roam at its own sweet will about the quarter-deck, indulging its pretty little whims perfectly unhindered. I had not allowed for its desire for self-instruction, resulting in the removal of each and all of my books to various and remote corners of the ship, such as it would occur to no adult person to explore, leaving my own crippled state, and consequent inability to go after them myself, out of the question; nor—and this is to show I am not thinking solely of myself in this matter—for its ingenuity in devising a new kind of gymnastic, consisting in running a camp-stool at full speed down the deck, regardless both of the

philosophy and the shins of those taking their daily constitutional up and down that place. I believe it would have been capable in its wickedness of making a slide, if it had only been given a piece of soap and shown how. Nor had I allowed for its faculties of voice, being able to keep up the same continuous squall, slightly altered at times to express its various phases of joy or sorrow, from 6.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m., at which time it would finally condescend to succumb to nature, and go to sleep. I had not, I say, taken into consideration all these, or its many other atrocities, such as it daily perpetrated on the quarter-deck; and with respect to my notions of the general loveableness of children, I left that ship with a wiser but a sadder heart.

Nor do I think it was from any innate dislike to children that I was so ready to see their deficiencies. On the contrary, before the accident, I had been striving to be educated, if possible, up to a fuller appreciation of their ways, and might any day have been seen trying to beguile the infant mind with an unripe apple of the largest dimensions, or endeavouring to teach it some new trick of getting down the companion-ladder in two, or even a less number of steps, knowing how, should its devoted mother see it, she would in the pride of her heart remove it to smother it with thankful caresses in the privacy of her cabin. But it had all been of no use; my kindness had proved inefficient, and the infantile population of the *Tagus* remained intact. And there was I lying impotent to do any more for it!

We were well into the Doldrums by this time, so everybody put on a greater amount of sleep during the day, and only woke up to violent exertion towards the evening. The ladies instituted five o'clock tea at four in the Captain's cabin, to which I was the only male, besides the Captain himself, admitted; and so between this and slumber, varied by having to rouse myself occasionally to throw something at the children, whom I don't believe 210° in the shade would have persuaded to keep quiet, the afternoons were not at all tedious, in spite of having to lie still with my leg up all day. I used to have my dinner brought up to me by the steward, and ate it in company with Mrs. Vestry, who did not care either to go down to the immense meals provided, where one either had to overeat oneself, or else sit and watch other people doing so; but in the evening I used to stay up till it turned too chilly, looking at meteors, or talking elementary metaphysics with Miss Vestry, or else listening to the uncle, who was extremely anxious for me to try his wet blanket and dry biscuits for my leg; and then some one below would recollect me, and come and help me to get down to the Debating Society's meeting in the after-gangway, where we were regaled with the yarns of the purser and chief engineer till bed-time.

The two careers of the *Tagus Gazette* and me became closely intermingled after this. Being fixed in my chair, I had plenty of time on my hands while other people were engaged in their daily locomotion, and I was accordingly formally installed in the post, which I had at first occupied

rather under protest of compositor, printer, and publisher of the matter that was brought to me to copy out, besides explainer, when circumstances required it. I think that was perhaps the most painful part of my accident, having to sit there, at the mercy of my readers, ready to decipher some composition of mine that the deficiencies of our tracing-paper had rendered more than usually indistinct in the duplicate of our journal; and worst of all was the listening to Mr. Farphar reading out extracts to some lady, and wading solemnly through the jokes without a smile on his countenance, or perhaps pausing for a reperusal of some especially satirical point, with a remark that the English seemed to him to be a little obscure.

But on the whole, I can strongly recommend any voyager who may happen to feel dull on board ship, and who would like to become the fashion, to get some other passenger friend to kick him.

CHAPTER XII.

AT CONCERT PITCH.

I GOT through another fifty pages of "Lothair" while I was laid up.

About three mornings after the accident, we were startled by the announcement that the Glee Club was going to give a concert. Everybody belonged to the Glee Club, and it had been practising very hard for the last week, ever since its formation. I had always attended very regularly at the practices. I have a magnificent voice, I know, because I very often sing when I am alone: it varies from the very highest altissimo to the very lowest bassissimo, according to requirement—the very thing, I should have thought, for a Glee Club. I can't quite manage, however, getting in with my part at the right moment. It's so difficult to remember to sing one thing when every one else is singing another; it's like trying to tap with one hand and rub with the other. Barring this, I don't see what objection there was to my belonging to the Glee Club. However, as I always found that when I joined in, they all stopped, and complained that the harmony began to go astray at that particular point, I felt that my talents were

wasted on them, so I gave up singing, and only listened.

The concert, though, was not to be confined to music. It was to include a Reading—by me. I bestowed a great deal of pains on preparation for it. I practised the art of declamation in my cabin, and heard myself received with imaginary thunders of applause. When I had settled on my success, I began to think of a subject. I thought of poetry, but there was none to be had on board but Browning; then of "Lothair," but I considered that most of my audience might not appreciate it; so at last I had to be content with selecting a passage out of an American novel I borrowed, and making the best of that. Then I set myself again to declaim in private, and Mrs. Banner, who occupied the neighbouring cabin, asked me if I was in the habit of talking in my sleep; but I remembered Demosthenes, and Disraeli, and other heroes of oratory, and resolved that since I wasn't to be allowed to sing, at any rate my Reading should make them regret it.

The concert was to be held in commemoration of our crossing the Line, and before we had ours, the sailors gave their little entertainment on deck. Father Neptune came on board, though rather late—not until we were considerably south of the Line—and the whole ceremony was gone through except the shaving. They have given up that part now on the steam-ships, all but the fees. Of course, on a sailing-ship, where there isn't much way on, and one hangs about on the Line ever so long, there is more time, and the performance is

more appropriate; but where steam is used, and the pace is more uniform, one just feels a slight shock for an instant, and one is miles the other side of the Line before one realizes one has come to it.

My old quartermaster came round with the bag, and when the collection was over it was nearly eight o'clock, and time for the concert to begin.

The saloon had been converted into a concert-room with very little trouble. The tables had been removed, the seats turned broadside on, and the piano moved up to the after-end, where a sort of screen of flags had been put up in "the tasteful way that Jack alone knows how to handle the bunting" (vide *Tagus Gazette*). Behind this screen the tables and odd chairs, and stewards, and other superfluous articles of the kind had been stowed. The spectators sat on the benches with their faces towards the piano—this was a gratuitous piece of information on the *T. G.'s* part to save any chance of mistake—also to fill up a line—and the performers occupied the front seats. I sat between Mrs. Le Trant and some of her convoy. I began to feel very hot, and to wish I hadn't been so rash as to offer my services. I couldn't make up my mind as to which of the four good bits I had found in my novel I should read. I had practised them all equally well, but they were all so good I grudged abandoning any of them, and as I looked at them, I kept coming to jokes that I felt I could give such force to, and yet of which I knew some must be sacrificed for want of time, so that I ended by choosing an entirely new piece that just occurred to me at the last moment. Then I put my

finger in the place, and sat still, getting hotter, waiting for my turn to come.

Those that had dress-clothes at hand had put them on. I had hitherto been rather exercised by not having a black coat to appear in at dinner, as I found was the prevalent fashion, but now I could swagger a bit about my dress-clothes, which I had eventually included in my luggage after all, and show I wasn't so destitute as I might have seemed at first. But it would have been better if the packing hadn't condensed them quite so much. It is all very well to be such a neat packer that one can get a dress-coat into the compass of an ordinary white tie, but the effect on said dress-coat on its first appearance in company afterwards is not so satisfactory. The wearer conveys the impression of wanting ironing out a little.

The Portuguese passengers were in great force. The concert consisting almost entirely of English songs, with the exception of one by the Brazilian Baroness in Portuguese, and a very small part of either section of the company understanding the other's language, this tribute of mutual appreciation of foreign talent by one nation to the other was highly gratifying.

Ockern officiated at the piano. Ockern was the great light of the Glee Club—he had got it up, drilled it, and everything; he had great musical talent—at least, he gave me to understand so, so I suppose I am all right in making the assertion. The other factor in the production of the accompaniments, the *Tagus* piano, was an instrument quite of its own kind. It had strings and a body

and a key-board and pedals, but beyond that it did not resemble a piano in any other way. It had never been subjected to the humiliating touch of a tuner, but had been suffered to assume a glorious independence of its own, that produced sometimes the most wonderful and unexpected effects. It would transform "Auld Robin Gray" into "Men of Harlech," and then when the performer waxed vehement with the sentiments of the latter tune and put his foot on the pedal, the whole melody would suddenly convert itself to "Oh, who will o'er the downs so free?" or something of that kind; one could never depend for certain on the interior arrangements. If ever an opportunity was afforded for finding the lost chord, it was on that piano; there was the finest collection of out-of-the-way chords on it, at any rate, that I ever heard. There was a hole in the lining at the back, which the Captain's cat had adopted as an entrance through which to introduce her little ones when she wanted to put them to bed.

Still it looked like a piano, and if too much attention was not paid to it, the skilful accompanist could keep up appearances by occasionally hitting on a note that did not jar too much on the feelings of his auditors through want of correspondence with the one being sung. Ockern started with an overture. Our programmes told us it was the "Wedding March," and everybody, quite unintentionally, glanced at the bride to see if she was blushing, but she evidently had not consulted her programme, and sat wrapt in

unconscious attention to the sweet strains that were proceeding from the piano.

Then Mr. Le Trant got up as chairman of the Glee Club—he was an honorary member, like myself; his singing days were passed—I suppose mine, so far as other people's opinion go for anything, haven't come on yet—and made an appropriate address to explain the object of our meeting, and how the plate was to be sent round in behalf of the Marine Widows' and Orphans' Society. When we had all cheered, my Portuguese friend had the gist of the speech explained to him in imperfect French, and then delivered the same sentiments to the Portuguese contingency, and they all cheered, and we all fumbled in our pockets, and negotiated loans in whispers with our neighbours, in the usual manner as when a collection is suddenly announced in church. Ockern played a few bars which would have been calculated to destroy any charitable feeling that we might have had, had it not been that our programmes told us they were intended for "Home, sweet home," and Mrs. Le Trant and one of the numerous Brazilian family went round with plates and collected a very fair amount, besides a large number of I O U's from passengers who on that occasion only didn't happen to have a shilling in their pockets. The first thing to follow was a glee by the whole club—honorary members excepted—"The hunt is up." Except when the piano came a little too much into prominence, this first glee went off rather well. The singers all kept time and straight backs, and there was no

tendency visible to screw or let the eyes wander out of the book.

Then came a duet by Miss Banner and one of Mrs. Le Trant's young ladies. "This was particularly well rendered," the *T. G.* said afterwards. "The stoccato in B flat especially excited our admiration, while the delicious harmony caused by the blending of Miss Banner's beautiful falsetto voice in C with Miss Dalby's rich soprano *un poco piu comme estar ante* in G sharp, backed up by the brilliant accompaniment of Dr. Ockern on the piano, enraptured us to a degree that is better to be imagined than described."

The Baroness's solo in Portuguese came next, accompanied by herself. The Baroness's voice was one that I was told was peculiar to all Portuguese —very much as if she had a cold on her chest. The great disadvantage of this sort of voice, of course, falls on the performer himself, as a cold on the chest would be no excuse for non-performance. But only think what Sims Reeves might make of it: he would double his income!

There was only one more glee now before my Reading was to come off. I heard afterwards that it was almost the best thing of the evening—not quite the best, of course—but I had no time to listen to it, as I was too busy preparing myself for the awful undertaking before me. I had read before, but only to small and select audiences of people who knew my antecedents, and of whom the majority, perhaps, considered they ought to applaud me as a friend or relation of their landlord, whose reception would possibly be prejudicial to

their rents; not to an entirely new set of faces brought together from the ends of the earth, for whose good-will I had to depend solely on my own merits. And besides this, with respect to the Portuguese, my country's honour was resting on me. Altogether my responsibilities began to weigh very heavily on me, and I almost wished I could faint, or do something of the sort, and get out of it that way. But it was too late now. I glanced down at my clothes to see if they were dreadfully crumpled, and even the most sanguine temperament could not but have admitted that they were. I gave a tug at my white tie, and nearly pulled it undone altogether; as it was, I dislocated it all to one side. Then I discovered I hadn't got a handkerchief, and my nose immediately began to itch; tried to remember if I had really forgotten to brush my hair; and when I got up to perform my duties, I was in about as unenviable a state as regarded the mental part of me as could be imagined.

Some hours before, while the fatal moment was far off, I had composed a little speech of introduction of myself in my new charactor of orator, to explain why it was I shouldn't be able to "rise fully" to this grand occasion, on account of my bad leg. But now I reflected that this *bon-mot* would take time; maybe it would have to be repeated, with notes, to some of the English, and it certainly would have to be translated to the Portuguese, and the whole point would be lost; so I gave it up, and plunged straight into serious business, so as to get it over as soon as possible.

Archatt and Ockern propped me up on a chair. I opened my book, turned over the leaves, and found two of them were not cut; that caused some little delay, while the audience was being searched for a penknife. Then I found the bit I had chosen was almost too long, and I hurried through it to see if any of it could be left out, but the whole of it was so essential to the unity of the narrative, that I resolved I might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, and as the public wanted to hear me read, they *should* hear me read. I began now to realize the recklessness attributed to the most cowardly soldier in action. I think I could even have dared a comic song, with appropriate gestures.

I began. I first started in about the tone I should adopt if I were reading the lessons in a large cathedral, but I heard mutterings in the back rows that sounded like "Speak up!" from the second-class passengers, and I found my voice was all going up through the skylight, and wasting its sweetness in the midnight air on the deck. I increased my voice, therefore, till I couldn't increase it any more. I felt it rushing in volumes out of the whole of me, from the crown of my head to the soles of my dress-shoes, but it didn't sound as if it belonged to me; I had only a confused notion of some one shouting in the far distance, over which shouting I had some sort of mysterious control, owing to my having the book in my hand. I kept my finger at the finishing place, and as the interval between me and it diminished, I read faster and faster, till I finally

turned over the last page, and staggered back in an exhausted condition to my seat. Then there arose a vast shout of applause, especially from the Portuguese part of the audience.

There were ten minutes' interval for refreshment, and then we proceeded to the second part; but I was so much occupied in fanning myself and making use of Mrs. Le Trant's smelling-bottle, and otherwise recovering myself, that I had little leisure to attend to other things. The doctor, who was in hopes some new symptom had broken out in me for his benefit, wished to get me another sixpennyworth of brandy, but I felt it was only a matter of time, and a night's rest would put me all right.

There were two glees, another duet, and a chorus, and then the performance of the *Tagus* Minstrels. These were the bathman, the baker, and one of the engineers, when in private life, but now corked for the occasion. For amateurs they were very good—the only objection was that they didn't know when to stop. The bathman played the concertina, and put himself into attitudes till I thought he was going to put something out, and I asked the doctor, a good deal with the object of diverting some of his notice from me, if he had bandages enough on board for more than one person. They sang and asked conundrums, and then acted a sort of play, of which the chief point of the joke lay in a bowl of the most unpretentious soapsuds with which the actors lathered each other till there was no vestige of negroism left about them at all. The Captain thought he was

justified in putting a stop to the exhibition at this point, so an end came to the evening. We all stood up and sang "God save the Queen" at the top of our voices; those who didn't know the words shouted the tune, and the Portuguese caught it up, and joined in as heartily as any of us.

CHAPTER XIII.

HIGH PRESSURE AND AN EXPLOSION.

THEN we got to the other side. First we touched at Pernambuco, an uninteresting place from a distance—at least, except for being the first sight of South America—with no harbour, so that we could not approach within a mile and a half of it; it was very rough, and those who had to go on shore, either for good, as the engineers, or on business, as Mr. Vestry and Mr. Le Trant, who were on the Railway Board, had to be lowered over the side in chairs into boats, an exciting enough process to watch, and occasioning some lively betting amongst those staying behind as to whether it would result in a ducking or not; and those who had to come on board had to be hoisted up in a like manner.

As far as I could see, Pernambuco consisted of a breakwater, a high water-cistern, and a railway-station; these public institutions being no doubt intended to promote the growth of a flourishing city round them at some future time.

We steamed on to Bahia, and got there on the morning after next. The Captain was very anxious to be there early, to meet his twin brother, the

captain of the return ship, whom he had not seen for seven years, and we arrived just in time for them to have forty minutes' conversation before the other ship had to leave. There was no great demonstration of feeling, no rushing into each other's arms and exclaiming, "It is—my broth—ar!"—merely a couple of handshakes and a "Good morning," as if they had only last parted overnight. They walked up and down a little together, and then one of them looked at his watch, and saw it was time to go; they shook hands again, and parted, perhaps not to meet again for another seven years. Only I have never been quite sure in my mind that we got our right captain, because they were as like one another as two peas.

Bahia looks more flourishing than Pernambuco. It has a fine Naples-shaped bay, whence its name —in full, Bahia de Todos Santos—and it is built in two parts, one on the water's edge, the commercial town, and the other up above on the cliff, where the rich people have their seats, with a lift connecting the two, which indulges in a smash every now and then, to keep the inhabitants from becoming too drowsy. Most of the passengers went on shore to stretch their legs, but the doctor wouldn't let me, so I had to stay on deck and keep my eye on the customs of the natives, as represented by their officers. A companion in misfortune turned up here. Mr. Le Trant tumbled down in the street and sprained his ankle, and had to be brought back in a boat and put to bed. If it had occurred earlier in the voyage, when there

was nothing else for the others to do, I might have been jealous, but now I could not only get about alone more, but they were beginning to think of themselves again; besides, I was pretty well established as a legitimate part of the ladies' circle, letting alone my sufferings, so I could afford to be generous, and let him go shares in the sympathy.

I was not entirely deprived of the sweets of freedom, however. Miss Vestry brought me back some flowers, and Mrs. Le Trant's party a pot of guava jelly, which I spent a whole afternoon over trying to make out what it was like, and ultimately concluded that it most resembled—guava jelly; and Archatt and Ockern brought a box of Bahia cigars for me, "because it is so awfully economical getting cigars at Bahia—they are so marvellously cheap." I smoked them steadily for the rest of the voyage, and finished the last the day we landed. They are very good to a certain point, and then it becomes a chance whether the facetious maker has introduced a small explosive or not; if one can pass this point safely, I may add they are very good throughout. And in the evening we left Bahia again.

We were now getting very near Rio, and we were soon to break up our already diminishing party altogether. It was time for last things to be begun to be said, and we all agreed we had never known such a pleasant set of people as ourselves, and swore eternal friendship, and promised to keep up constant correspondence with each other, and all that sort of thing; in short, the last part of

the main voyage was spent in a general state of mutual admiration. In our anxiety to make as good a last impression on one another as we could, we put ourselves into an even greater amount of tension than before, and the effects were too much for us.

We had had almost every kind of desirability we could think of to make our miniature season perfect, except a ball. A deputation of the most influential ladies was organized, therefore, who went to the Captain and represented that we must have a ball; we would not answer for the consequences of a refusal, even to the blowing up of the ship with a box of Bahia cigars. The Captain, who was rather given to take things very much as they came, especially when ladies were concerned—he had already let them turn his cabin inside out for their afternoon tea—said that he wasn't much of a dancing man himself, as his duties didn't allow him much leisure for that amusement; he occasionally gave vent to his feelings by indulging in some of the steps of the sailors' hornpipe when shut up alone in his cabin, and feeling very exuberant—but on the whole, he had no personal objection, and we might have our ball. The word was passed, and the decks were immediately cleared for action.

We didn't issue any particular invitations, as there was no one to be left out, but it was communicated at the dinner-table that the ball would commence at eight sharp, without reference to absentees. We got through dinner rather quicker than usual, and then went up to see how we could

most look as if we were doing something to help the sailors.

The ball was to be on the quarter-deck, as being the most commodious space we had. The side awnings were let down, and flags hung about in tasteful festoons, with a few ship's-lanterns swinging about here and there, just high enough to make it a work of skill to avoid hitting one's head against them. The scene was a trifle dark, but still there was enough light to see one's way to steer, and that is all really needed in a ball-room, if you come to view things from a point of necessity. All the additional lights one sees about at a London ball are only so many evidences of a superfluous luxury.

We had to dispense with flowers and perfumes of that kind, as the *Tagus* didn't keep a flower-garden amongst the other items she carried, but the deficiencies in that respect were somewhat compensated by the abundance of the ventilation, in which respect our ball-room was considerably in advance of a good many London ones. There were fewer lights on the conservatory side of the deck, but nobody could grumble at that, even though they might complain of the obscurity of the ball-room itself. We made our conservatory for partners to wander into in the proper way on the lee side of the deck, as the other side was more convenient for dancing on, from its slope. It is a curious fact that, though the deck is built all in one piece, the slope one side is always more than the other. Mr. Farphar contradicted this hypothesis of mine, but I challenged him to

try, and he found himself in the scuppers in no time.

Archatt and I constructed a splendid grotto in the conservatory out of deck-chairs covered with plaid rugs and shawls, but Ockern and his partner stupidly went and sat on it, and brought the whole thing down with a run.

Besides this, we had the companion-stairs to sit on, and the saloon as a refreshment-room, all complete.

We had some difficulty in providing the music. Unfortunately there was very little dance-music on board, and those ladies who were not going to dance were very sorry, but couldn't play dance-music without the notes. Various suggestions were offered. Some proposed that the glees should be turned into valses, or that a *Tagus* quadrille should be improvised out of them. Mr. Le Trant and myself, being of course unable to dance, he being on a right-hand crutch and I on a left-hand one, were appealed to; he could do something on the comb, and I could play "God save the Queen" and the "Old Hundredth" with one finger, which perhaps might do to dance to, if played *allegro;* or we both thought we could whistle most of the Lancers. But our offers were rejected, and the committee, for of course we had a committee—of the whole house—was almost on the point of falling back on the expedient of singing quadrilles, when the Brazilian father, M. Petro, who had hitherto been a very reserved man, sitting amongst his family, and apparently never being taken much notice of either by them

or any one else, suddenly stepped into the breach with the announcement that he could play the Lancers, thought he could manage a quadrille, and would be very happy to do anything else in that way that he could for us. The spirits of the committee, which had been almost failing them, immediately rose to something over boiling-point, and what with this, and a happy remembrance that the captain's boy—a youth of very high character, who might have been any age from sixteen to sixty-six—had been heard perpetrating things on the concertina, and Ockern saying that he could pick out a valse when put to it, and not too attentively criticized, our fears for the collapse of the ball for want of music were dispelled. The piano was brought on deck and firmly lashed to the binnacle, and M. Petro was also brought and firmly lashed to the piano, and the music got under weigh.

It was not a dress ball. Every one appeared in their ordinary clothes, and most of the gentlemen wore their hats or caps according to taste. We were too much occupied in enjoying ourselves to have any rigid regard for appearances. None of the dresses need therefore be described.

M. Petro opened with an impromptu of his own, "Recollections of various Valses." There was no formal opening, but one couple at last weighed anchor, and staggered unsteadily down the deck, first slowly, almost funereally, then faster and faster until they were fairly on their course. Another couple and then another followed, until the whole deck was thronged with revolving

twin-bodies, tacking about and skilfully—or not, as the case might be—steering in between each other amongst the patches of light, like so many ships of the same convoy being tossed about in a storm. This was essentially a nautical ball. The steps had to be regulated by the motion of the ship. There had been a Boston dip before that, and a Liverpool lurch; we invented a *Tagus* trip. Some of the couples went so far as to trip up altogether, and rolled down until they were brought up short against the saloon skylight, in amongst the wallflowers, which chiefly consisted of Mr. Le Trant and myself, who sat and applauded the manœuvres. We had two more valses by the same composer, "Memories," and "Improviso," both on much the same lines as the first, and then the command was given to fall in for the Lancers.

If any merit can be claimed for uniqueness of design, or originality of composition—in fact, for a general desire on the part of the performers to introduce a drastic reform into the whole system of Lancer-dancing, those Lancers certainly deserve the utmost praise that can be bestowed on them. The music was jerky, and the figures mixed themselves up in M. Petro's head almost as effectually as in the dancers'. Half of these were engaged in the first figure, while most of the rest were struggling in something bearing a faint resemblance to the third, and here and there an unattached couple from one set—for there were enough entries to make up two sets—might be seen vainly endeavouring to find their place in the other one. The only part where anything like the ordinary

conventionalities of the Lancers was observed was when the well-known music to the last figure was struck up: that was kept really distinct from the others, but even then, after Ockern; M.C., had gone round with the usual "Outside, inside," the two sets evidently came to a tacit agreement that it would be better to merge themselves into one, and finish up all together in one grand united muddle. This figure, however, was so comparatively successful that nothing would content these infatuates but to repeat it several times, and when it was at last all over, everyone, musician, dancers, and spectators, were in such a state of mental whirl that it required a long interval of rest and refreshment, especially the latter, to restore us.

However, when we had got somewhat better, we declared ourselves perfectly ready to go on again, and when I returned with the third set of chaperones that I had escorted down to supper, we found the dancers as hard at it again as ever. M. Petro had been released from his post at the piano, and the Captain's boy had been turned on with the concertina. They were now trying a polka. It was called the "Mort de Vache:" it had a savour of the "Bric-à-brac" about it, with an occasional glimmer of that other one with the difficult Polish name, "Kamascratchki," or whatever it is, coming like a faint whisper from somewhere across the ocean, with variations *à la* Captain's boy to give it a certain stamp of its own. After that the "Mabel" valse, first three bars over and over again; but before the captain's boy had run down, the piano began again under

Ockern's auspices, and for a little while we had a sweet compendium of "Dreamland"—or what the piano intended for "Dreamland"—and "Mabel," in different keys, the concertinist perseveringly continuing his efforts to do all he could for us, till some one went round and carried him off, still concertining, down below. A rash spirit proposed a quadrille after this, but nobody dared venture on another square dance, and the culprit was marched off and put to bed as not responsible for his own actions. As it was now getting late, as hours go on board ship, "Sir Roger" was commanded as a finale. M. Petro thought he had heard "Sir Roger" when on a visit to England a long time ago—"popular-air-national-anthem," he knew perfectly,—so was deputed to make the attempt, and succeeded in producing a very good imitation of "Pop goes the Weasel." But it answered the purpose, and it was got through without any accidents; and then we all joined hands round the piano and sang—without music this time, so as not to spoil any of the effect—"Auld Lang Syne," and went down below to more refreshments, and some of us turned in.

Those that didn't adjourned to the Debating Society, and proceeded to discuss the merits of the "Marseillaise," first in the light of a tune, and secondly as a patriotic song: whether it was adapted to the principles of free trade, and if not, why there was any reason that England should not be considered the most perfect form of republic in the world; with other minor topics of that nature. There was a Mr. Belton, who

had joined us at Bahia, and a Mr. Wye from Pernambuco, who entered very spiritedly into the discussion. Mr. Belton was very great on the English as the pioneers of civilization, and insisted on enforcing this theory on our attention at intervals of five minutes throughout the evening; but perhaps it was owing to the sea-air, or more probably to the Lancers, that we did not come to any very definite conclusions on any subject whatever.

It was rumoured that some of the debaters were found about next morning in various parts of the ship where they ought not to have been: one in the bath, wondering why his steward had removed all his sheets and the bottom of his berth; and another on deck, trying to take off his boots by means of the steam-winch: and talking of boots, the bootman is reported to have said he had never known a *fancy* for putting out one odd boot to be cleaned to have seized so many of the passengers at once before.

I always wore canvas shoes myself.

CHAPTER XIV.

BRAZIL NOTES.

RIO is the great break in the journey to South America, like Swindon on the G.W.R., where people get out to stretch their legs a bit, and some leave altogether to continue their route by branch lines. We were in sight of land from the first thing in the morning—at least in *my* morning, which began about half-past eight. The coast was very beautiful, splendid granite rocks rising sheer out of the sea, blackbeetling cliffs, everything first-class. Mr. Elborough lent me his sketch-book, and I copied some of his ideas, which I have by me still. This sketch-book contained a collection of the finest works of art. The colouring was at least as three to one of that in the reality, so that the memory of it took longer to fade. Latterly I always took to deriving my notions of scenery out of this book, because then I took home about the proper impressions, when time had toned them down.

Of course I hurried up in the middle of my breakfast to see the Sugar Loaf. One could very well go home and get off the rest of the scenery by summing it up as "stupendous," but one must

have details of the Sugar Loaf if one wants to have it believed one has really been to Rio. It is an immense solid block of granite, rising straight out of the sea on the left of the harbour entrance as you go in. It is my notion of what the Peak of Teneriffe ought to be, only not so big. And I don't think I can say much more about it; such lots of people have been there before me.

Rio harbour is certainly very fine. The granite cliffs that shut in the entrance suddenly fall back from the water's edge, and there lies the huge expanse of water, the largest harbour in the world—except, perhaps, one—Sydney—but I have never been there, so can't give any opinion on that vexed question—stretching away before you as far as you can see, with just an intimation of the Organ Mountains, looking more like clouds than anything else, at the extreme end. Rio itself lies on the left as you enter, about three or four miles from the sea. We had to stop at a fort about a mile inside the entrance, for the custom-house officers to come off. They arrived in a large fleet of tenders, and after pulling all round the ship, and satisfying themselves that not more than twenty of them need come and look after our honesty, we proceeded up the harbour, with all the tenders keeping up with us, and buzzing around like so many bluebottles round some leviathan. This was a poetic idea of one of our passengers. He was so proud of it, I thought it would be a pity if it was lost.

The usual crowd of visitors came on board as soon as we were moored, to see their friends and get lunch. We had been under the impression

that it was comparatively warm, and had on our lightest clothes, and only as much of them as was necessary for propriety; but the Rio de Janeirans knew better. It was mid-winter out there, or very nearly so—July 30th was the exact day, and only 75° in the shade; quite the day for great-coats and comforters, and have them on they did. The Rio de Janeiran is a great stickler for the unities, and he acted his part well, even to the shivering.

The Petro family left us here. It took some time to collect it, and when it had got half-way to shore in a little fleet of assorted boats of different kinds, it was thought that some of it had been left behind, which had to be returned for and searched for all over the ship in vain, till on going over the reckoning again it was discovered that there had been no mistake after all. A special steam-winch was requisitioned for its luggage, and as much time was spent over its going out as its coming in. The Baroness left us here, too. Her father was to come and meet her, she knew, but she had been so long away that she had forgotten what he was like. Her godfather seemed to have given her up altogether. I saw him go off alone, with his luggage contained in a bandbox; perhaps her behaviour during the voyage had convinced him that she could do very well without him. She adopted the simple expedient of asking all the elderly gentlemen who had come off to the ship if they happened to be looking out for anything answering to her description, and at last pitched on one that seemed to suit. There was a rush and a stage embrace, and father and daughter—

I suppose it was all right, as he didn't seem to object very much—exeunt happily.

Mr. Le Trant and I put ourselves in a row on deck all the morning to inspect and be inspected by our visitors, but most of the passengers went away about three, he included, to spend the time the ship was in harbour out of the noise of the steam-winch. The doctor wouldn't let me go without him, and I and the single lady who had her place at our table were left the sole passengers on board. Both of us having very strict notions of what was proper, she sat on one side of the deck, and I on the other, and we never spoke a word to each other the whole day.

The customs' men took possession of the deck, and sat about on all the chairs indiscriminately. I occupied as many as I conveniently could at once—about six—to keep the intruders out; but I saw that the all I could do was but very little, so I at last abandoned the deck to their mercies and expectoration, and went down to the bath and turned on the cold tap again.

Our table at dinner was very small that night. The doctor came and joined us, and he and the chief engineer, the single lady, and myself were the only persons dining at all. I think we ate more from a sense of duty than anything else, not wishing to defraud the company. Afterwards, I and the doctor went up and gazed at as much of the town as we could from the deck. There were a good many lights visible, and every now and then a firework would go up to vary the view. They send fireworks up at all theatres and public

performances wherever there is a stage wait, to keep the people's attention off the mishap. There was a great festival on the night we were there, and the Emperor was going round incog., that is, he didn't mind being recognized, but he wanted an excuse for going to the pit. He is a very simple man. I found this out at an hotel I stopped at once in Brittany, the chief recommendation of which was that it had been patronized by S.M. de Brazil. When we demanded baths in the morning, and learnt that such things were unknown in those parts, we naturally asked what S.M. had done, and the hotel-keeper replied, "Oh, he was a very simple man; he did not require a bath."

It was very quiet on the harbour. Nothing to interrupt our meditation except the quartermaster occasionally going to the side and addressing some party of the name of Johnny in a lighter below. Every foreigner is called Johnny by the sailors—it saves such a lot of trouble.

The doctor reveried and I reveried. We talked of past times and home memories, and told each other a great many extraordinary adventures that we had had, or, at any rate, that very intimate friends of ours had had, which was the next best thing. Then we analyzed all our fellow-passengers' characters, and ended by agreeing that all but ourselves had their little peccadilloes, but they must be borne with for the little time we had left to be together; and we criticized the singing we had heard during the voyage, and indulged each other with specimens of what our ideas of really good singing were. After that we listened to a

dog barking on shore—a sweet sound after having been so long away from land; and when it had done striking eight, which according to the shore clocks was a matter of twenty minutes, and we had compared our watches, and found the shore time was hopelessly slow, we swore another eternal friendship, and he helped me downstairs, and we turned in early.

I didn't sleep very well, as the steam-winches were working their hardest all night, and every now and then there came great bumps along the floor of the hold as the square packages were tipped along, that shook the whole ship, and made me hold myself ready to run on deck on the first symptom of the bottom of the ship being knocked out. I therefore rose early and went up on deck, which I found occupied by the slumbering customs, who had arranged themselves all in a row along the top of the skylight, and looked like so many sparrows asleep on a telegraph wire, and a large body of natives, who had come off to see what they could pick up. I was fallen upon by all of them, to engage them to take me on shore. I chartered four of them as my champions against the others, and then went below and left them to settle as best they could. When I came up after breakfast there was only one whole one left, and as he couldn't give a satisfactory account of himself to the chief officer, he was dismissed too.

I had some letters of introduction to some people at Rio, and as it would seem foolish to have brought them out all the way, and then not deliver them, I wanted to give myself a holiday from the

doctor, and go on shore to sleep. He was very reluctant about it, and began to infer all sorts of dreadful possibilities; if I went, it should be entirely at my own risk, and he washed his hands of anything that might happen to me. It flashed on me that if I took him as part of my personal outfit, he couldn't say anything against it; so I proposed it to him, and he consented, as he thought a run on shore would do him good, too. He provided against all contingencies during his absence by putting the chief officer in charge of the dispensary, with careful instructions as to the external and internal administration of blue pill and black draught, which were the only condiments in the medicine-chest that he allowed him to tamper with, and we started for shore directly after breakfast.

I had still been of two minds about going, even up to the midday before; it was entirely to depend on whether my injury took a turn for the better or not; and so, while thus uncertain, I had thought I might as well be generous, not to say gallant, and had lent my macintosh to the bride and bridegroom, who had planned to go with Ockern and the uncle up to Tijuca, a place with a view somewhere up behind Rio. I was sorry this morning, as it looked cloudy, and typhoid fever with variations of quartan-ague was about the least that the doctor said would happen if one was caught in a shower in these parts. My ulster was too hot to take, though it was mid-winter, so at last I had to go and ask the chief-engineer if he could trust me with an umbrella. I offered to leave my watch as

security, but after he had looked at it, he said he might as well risk his property without that precaution. It was a very precious umbrella, the one he used on shore at Southampton to carry under his arm; but it was a virgin one, and had never been opened, and he wasn't sure if it could be. Still it would do to frighten the rain off, so he called his man, a melancholy and gradually wasting-away individual, who always gave me the impression that he was thinking of something else, to get it down from the rack overhead.

He treated the umbrella with great respect: it was clear that it required it, for it was stowed away carefully at the top of the rack out of danger, rolled up in brown paper with some camphor to keep the moths out, and a piece of tarpaulin over the whole. When it had been cautiously lowered to the deck a sudden impulse of daring curiosity prompted the engineer to investigate the interior, and he directed his man to open it. The man looked surprised, but it is not the way at sea to argue with a superior officer, so he undid the band and began to unroll it, but before he had half effected his purpose, the umbrella began to exhibit tendencies that caused its owner to cry out in alarm to suspend the operation. He then made it over to me, coupling the loan with an invocation of the most awful consequences on my head if anything should happen to it. I promised not to pry into the hidden mysteries of the inside on any account, not if all the elements should combine to pour their wrath upon my head, and took it away reverently.

The Company's agent had invited us to go on shore with him, so I put a few things into a small bag, and prepared to descend into his launch. I was stopped at the top of the ladder by a custom-house official to know if I had anything to declare, but I said I hadn't, and understood him to say I might pass on, but what he really had said was that I must leave my things to be sent after me, so I was ignominiously brought up short by the coat-tail, as I attempted to continue on my way down. However, my steward came to my help, and advised me to open my things for inspection, which I readily did; and I eventually got everything through, with the exception of a tooth-brush, which was retained as treasonable goods; but as I fortunately had another in my pocket, which I was not called upon to reveal, that didn't much matter. The head-man took my card and noted down an accurate description of my person, for further police supervisionary purposes, and they let me go down to the launch.

There was a Brazilian family with us, who had done their church early—it was Sunday—and were now going the round of the ships in harbour, breakfasting on one, lunching on another, and dining on a third; in fact, making quite a happy day of it. We didn't go straight on shore, but steamed round the other ships lying about, to inspect the beauties of the Brazilian navy.

Of course it is necessary for an Empire like Brazil to have a Navy, so it has bought up a job lot of second-hand ships from other nations, and established one. Occasionally this goes for a cruise

round the harbour, but it has never yet ventured on a review with real powder and shot—the results might be too disastrous. Once a ship went outside, and lost herself for a week, and two steamers, an English and a French one, had to go and look for her, and tow her back. She was pointed out to us. She is now laid up on purpose to be pointed out as the ship that has been to sea. There are traditions current, I believe, of a ship having sailed away, and the captain returning by himself in a steamer after an absence of two years, with wild legends of his having navigated his ship to China. The ship itself never came back; but he was given an ovation, and made Lord High Admiral at once on the strength of his exploits, and retired to fatten on his pension.

Everything in Rio wears a distressing air of second-handness—as if a lot of people had come there and said, "Oh, look here! here's a jolly country; let's set up an Empire;" and then got a lot of ready-made reach-me-down things, and think that will do, just to say they have got soldiers and sailors and public works. But they won't bear looking into—they're all shoddy. I watched the foundation brick of a new General Post Office, or Royal Exchange, or something, being laid on the morning I landed, and by the time I came off again next day, the massive walls of lath and plaster had risen to the height of a story, and a man was going up a ladder balancing a huge triglyph on his shoulder to place it on the top of a column. And their soldiers, though they look tolerably massive fellows, as they recline against

their sentry-boxes with cigars in their mouths, and their guns under their arms like Bond Street umbrellas, pictures of latent power, disappoint the spectator when they proceed down the street in disorder, all out of step, and more like a London mob running to see an accident than anything else. I believe any second-rate English volunteer corps would give them points and smash them in half an hour. And their sailors look very well standing about in typical naval attitudes on the decks of their ships as long as they don't try to do anything, but we saw some whom fancy had prompted to go on shore, and who had got into a boat to row there. They just dipped their oars into the water one after the other, and then rested—I counted thirty between each dip. If it hadn't been for the wind catching the coxswain's parasol, and the wash of an occasional passing steamer, they wouldn't have got on at all.

We went to look at some docks cut out of the living rock; certainly a wonderful work, and it was surprising to see them there, considering that the Brazilians have only set up business for themselves within the century, until we learnt that they were done by an English company; and even now they are getting out of repair.

The doctor didn't let me walk about much over the docks, as I only had the umbrella instead of my crutch, so we sat on a post and observed from there. Somebody came and told us we were sitting on the classic spot where Captain Cook once landed and put up a post. The post has been removed, but the spot is still there. I don't

know why the doctor should have got up and walked away so hurriedly. I sat still, because I thought the interest of the place must want renovating.

We landed at last at the Custom-house, after some little delay caused by the umbrella having slipped through the bars against which I had leant it into the coalhole, whence the nigger who minded the engines refused to restore it under half-a-crown. There is sand for the first hundred yards or so from the quay, and then the roadway degenerates into a heap of square paving-stones shot down anyhow, with a little mortar dabbed on here and there to indicate an intention of fixing them together some day. The streets are very narrow, and the gutters are in the middle of them; there are no particular side-walks, and the tramways fill up most of the space; when they can't get a broad-gauge tram in, they put down a narrow one, and if that doesn't fit in, they run a car down the street, which chips pieces out of the houses till it has worn sufficient room for itself. When a car runs down a street, it whistles, and the foot-passengers have to be responsible for themselves. If a car meets a carriage, the carriage can't possibly turn, and it all depends on the affability of the drivers how long they take to settle which shall back out of it.

We went down the Rue d'Ouvida, the Regent Street, so to speak, of Rio, and admired the shops; which we had time to do, as this street is the one exception to the universality of trams. Business is not in the least suspended on Sunday.

The Emperor decreed a few years ago that everything was to shut till two on Sunday, but the rule was carried out rigorously for a fortnight, and then dropped into disuse.

The doctor had found a friend, who put us as far as he could into the right way for the English hotel in the outskirts, where we were to join the rest of our passengers. Neither the doctor nor I knew a word of the language, so after we had been carried as far as the impetus of this first start would take us, we were to adopt the old Mrs. A'Becket dodge of wandering up and down, repeating "Carson's," till we got there; and for money matters we were to trust to the honesty of the tram-conductors and other natives with whom we might be brought into pecuniary relations. I gave the boy who had carried my bag from the launch an English shilling. He was a very honest boy, and pursued the tram for some time, vociferating and gesticulating, evidently thinking I had made a mistake, till at last he got out of breath, and went home to reap the reward of his scrupulousness.

Carson's lies a long way out in a suburb called Butafewgo, or something like that. We had rather a rough passage, as the tram-rails are simply chucked down, end to end, loosely on the stone-heaps, without sleepers or anything.

We kept on repeating "Carson's" at intervals of three minutes, and so successfully effected two changes into other trams, spending countless sums of money in the process, and very nearly leaving the umbrella behind once; and at last the third

conductor landed us opposite the desired spot. I very nearly ended my career there altogether, for, as I was getting down, another car whirled past, and if the doctor hadn't somehow made a miraculously long arm, and reached over four stout negresses and a wealthy Brazilian merchant, and pulled me back by the coat, my head would have been taken off as clean as with a knife. It would have been an unsatisfactory episode in my travels—worse than my leg even.

The doctor and I and the umbrella and the bag entered Carson's, and, finding no one about, went upstairs and wandered down some passages till we came to a large dining-room, where there was still no one to be seen but another stranger—at least, he appeared so, as he took no further notice of us than just to look up at us, and then go on eating. There were materials for lunch on the table, so the doctor and I mutually invited each other to partake. When we had had as much as we wanted, we ate some more to fill up the time till some one came to be paid, but still there were no signs of a proprietor or official of any sort. We felt as if we were in an enchanted castle in a fairy tale. Then one of our passengers came in, and we had more lunch for company's sake. At last we couldn't possibly eat any more, so, as we perceived our companion proceeding to smoke, we lighted our cigars, and after that we had two cigarettes each, but still no one came. We were just going away in despair, when a voice said, "Hi!" and the stranger in the corner produced a napkin out of his pocket, and became a waiter.

We told him we had come to stop for some time, so that it would be worth his while to treat us with distinction, and asked if we could have any rooms. He said he was very full, but he could let us have a very nice child's cot in the billiard-room; would we come down and look at the accommodation?

We went, and when we had looked the doctor most generously gave up all claim on the cot to me on the instant. Behind the billiard-room was a long verandah, with single rooms opening on to it, which were the bachelors' bedrooms, and in front of them we found Mr. Le Trant reposing his leg. He reported the rest of the party gone to church; but presently they came in, and as the Vestry and Le Trant parties proper had some visits to pay, Archatt and Wye and the doctor and another little passenger whom we had picked up at Pernambuco, and who appeared to be a protégé of Wye's, trotting about after him everywhere, like a dog, and myself, got into a tram and went to spend the afternoon at the Botanical Gardens. The umbrella had left itself in the lunching-room, and had to be redeemed again at the cost of another shilling from the clutches of a negro waiter, who had appeared on the scene expressly for the purpose of appropriating it.

We had a very pleasant drive down, along the edge of the water the whole way, with pretty bays—at least so they looked on a passing glimpse, though all the fevers in the world may have been really lurking in them—on one side, and the villa residences of the commercial population on the

other. We saw lots of people getting in and out of the tram, but they were all in their Parisian holiday clothing, evidently not having heard we were coming, so having had no time to put on their specialities. We only noticed one woman who had her hair done in the real Brazilian fashion, with all the last week's dripping and a skewer stuck through. There were some good specimens of primitive dirt begging at the road-side; but rags are very much the same anywhere.

The Botanical Gardens are somewhere about the same distance off Rio as Putney is from London. When we got there we first inspected the long avenue of palms, which is quite *the* show thing at Rio; one of the thousand-and-one wonders of the world; the ancients used to be content with eight, but we are so greedy nowadays. These palms are several hundred—or thousand, but my numbers are rather indistinct in my notes—feet in height; they looked to me as if a good thrower could throw a cricket-ball over them, but perhaps allowances must be made for the clearness of the atmosphere; it never does to trust to one's own eyes too much in a foreign country—at least, if you want to be believed when you come home. I was told that if a man goes up he looks like a very small monkey at the top. We did not see a man go up.

We walked down the avenue, and our hearts were touched at finding we were not the first of our race to visit that spot. We recognized a well-known name cut on several of the trees.

Then we heard sounds of revelry, and turning aside into a banana-grove we found a cornet-à-piston, and a fiddle accompanying the movements of a native dance, a jiggety sort of affair, something between Sir Roger and the Tempête. After watching a little time, Wye's protégé who, whatever he looked like, certainly didn't suggest a dancing-man, declared he had completely caught the idea, and was very anxious to cut in; Wye told him not to make a fool of himself, and come on.

The doctor now felt thirsty, so he thought I had walked enough, and insisted on my crossing the road with him to a refreshment place, and sitting down while he had some beer. This was evidently the Cremorne of Rio. We walked round, after the doctor's beer, to study the natives at their sports; but though they were all swinging and otherwise junketing in their Sunday best, they always stopped and were shy when we came to them. So we unanimously voted them a curious lot of creatures, and went away.

We returned to the hotel as we had gone, and sat down to dinner. Ockern and his party came in while we were at it, having found there were no beds. The bride and the bridegroom and the uncle went back to the ship, but Ockern accepted my offer of half the billiard-room. We tossed up for the cot, and I won, so Ockern had to camp out on the billiard-table.

After dinner I began to feel the effects of leaving the ship. I wish to state on my honour as a traveller that I took no wine at dinner, and I by

applying for it in writing can get the doctor's testimony; but on passing from the dinner-table everything seemed suddenly to be going up and down. I was perfectly conscious of what I was doing, I know, for I distinctly remember the umbrella would keep twining itself round my legs; but I tried to make a straight course down the passage, and the result must have looked very suspicious to any one who met me, and did not know my habitual integrity of character. I was conscious of feeling all that, too. I got down a dangerous flight of stone stairs, and then decided it was no use trying to do anything else, and the best thing would be to go to bed. I took off my boots, wound up my watch, and turned in, that is, as much of me as would go into three feet six, or thereabouts; the rest hung over the two ends, and was rather uncomfortable, till I got reconciled to the hardness of the rails, and I slumbered.

I have no recollection of Ockern's coming to his billiard-table, though I have a kind of hazy-dozy idea that two natives came in at a late hour for a game; but next morning I awoke, and felt all right again. An intelligent negro was waiting at the foot of my bed till I woke, having already carefully blacked my patent-leather shoes, and now being ready to conduct me to the bath, and get me some coffee. It was about seven o'clock. I revelled in that bath. I had begun rather to tire of the continual salt-water ones on board, and I was getting like a mixed pickle in appearance, so it was about time to rinse some of the brine out

of me. I stayed in about a quarter of an hour, and when I came out the water was quite brackish.

Then I went back and dressed, and got the umbrella, which had shared my humble couch, and strolled about with Ockern under the palm-trees in the back-garden till breakfast, which, Carson's being an English hotel, was at a reasonable English hour, 9.30. The same waiter who had not waited on us the night before looked in and smiled on us at breakfast, but otherwise we had to help ourselves. Then Mr. Le Trant offered me a lift in a fly he had ordered to go and do some shopping with, in return for my services as a linguist; I having the advantage over him in so far as he knew no foreign tongue at all, while I had a faint glimmering of French, which, of course, is a great thing in a Portuguese country. Besides, I being wrong in the right leg, and he in the left, we were also to be of service to each other as mutual supports.

We took another turn round the garden, so as to get ourselves together till the fly came. A note on Brazilian gardens: the grass is rather coarser than ordinary rye-grass; there are palm-trees and cabbages about, also one or two garden-seats, a garden-wall, and a dog and cat, all very much like most things at Rio—in a very advanced stage of decomposition.

I discharged my bill at Carson's—I could have stayed at the Grosvenor for a week for nearly the same money—as I did not intend coming back again; and when the fly came round, which was after the driver had been coaxed into undertaking

the job, and had fortified himself with a good deal of stimulant, I got in with Mr. Le Trant, and took my bag and the umbrella with me. We had strict orders from the captain to be on board at three, as he was going to sail as soon as the cargo was on board, without waiting for any one.

We drove very furiously through the streets as long as they were wide enough, and when we got to the town proper, where they were too narrow, we did not abate our pace in the least. I hadn't much time to see things, but one thing I did notice, and that was a negro leaning up against a wall to blow his nose; and I drew my conclusions therefrom on the innate industry of the negro race when liberated: *vide* A. Smith *passim*. Our fly was an open-close one, that is, it was a close one with all the windows taken out. It was very dusty and draughty, and Mr. Le Trant took the whole way into town trying to light a cigar.

I have always found that there is nothing like shopping for developing one's faculties for managing foreign languages; it produces such a lot of latent talent in the way of tropes and similes and periphrases that one has never been aware existed in one's mind before, and the man that can go in for these things, I say, must have a far greater command of the language than one who simply asks directly for what he wants.

Mr. Le Trant first went to an English chemist's, and, as he didn't want me there, I became adventurous, and hobbled off in the meanwhile to make some purchases on my own account. I changed a pound, and bought a cigar-holder; I

wanted a good long one for my Bahia cigars, to keep the danger as far off as possible. I don't know how much it cost; I got back two bank-notes, three things like florins, and four other things like shillings. Then I rejoined Mr. Le Trant in the fly, having put my cigar-holder in my pocket, and the first thing I did was to sit upon it, and it broke.

Mr. Le Trant had a particular craving for a gold thimble. He had got some phrases written out by the English apothecary, which we first tried to say to our driver, and when we found he wouldn't understand, we showed them to him, so that we eventually arrived at the right place; but Mr. Le Trant had neglected to obtain the essential word for thimble in Portuguese, and I couldn't remember it in French or German. We were pulled up at the end of the Rue d'Ouvidor, down which the cabby refused to drive us, as thoroughfare is forbidden there for vehicles, so we got out together and advanced our brigade in a sort of Sunday-school three-legged-race fashion down the street till we came to a jeweller's.

The jeweller couldn't make out what we wanted. We had out all the rings and bracelets in his shop, and then Mr. Le Trant tried the dumb-show of sewing, but that demonstration only had the effect of alarming him, and made him look about anxiously for something to defend himself with. We left, and moved across to a shop where we saw in the window, "One speaks English," to see if they would be kind enough to tell us the Portuguese for thimble. We had to wait till the

one who spoke English came in from a stroll, and then we found his English unfortunately only ran to agricultural instruments, which was what his firm dealt in; so when we said, "thing to sew with," and he had told us, we went back to the jeweller's, who only regarded us as worse lunatics than ever.

We bought some feathered flowers—speciality of Rio—and I changed some of my bank-notes, and then we drove about half-a-mile round a block of houses, and came back about ten doors behind where the cab had been standing, where I was dropped, and went up to see a friend I had got a letter to. The reason for this extraordinary manœuvre on cabby's part was not his desire to increase his fare by lengthening the distance, but only an extreme anxiety to please, and to save me the trouble of walking back ten doors down the street. Cabs may only go one way, which is marked out by arrows on the wall, so that his obliging disposition necessitated a good deal of circumvention.

I had never met my friend in my life before, but he nevertheless fell into my arms and declared he was as glad to see me as if I had been his own grandmother; and then told me he had ascertained that there was no need for me to hurry on board till eight that evening, as the *Tagus* had such a lot of coffee to take to Santos, the place whence the best is exported to England, that she could not sail till next morning at the earliest, and he intended to celebrate my arrival by occupying the time afforded by my respite with a plunge into the stream of dissipation, the more so as it was an

early-closing day at his office. I am not addicted to larks myself, but as this was only once and away, and it couldn't last more than six hours at the outside, I consented, and, leaving my bag at the office, we set out on our wild career.

It was only wild, however, so far that we rushed and were whirled about in trams in a most frantic way, and my impressions of Rio are something on a par with those that I formed of Lisbon. We filled up the hour between two and three at lunch at a restaurant, where I met the doctor, who had come on shore for the day again, and who particularly enjoined me to take great care of myself, and on no account to walk too much. Then between three and six I saw a fine hospital, which was one of the few things at Rio that was in repair, and that was because religion has got hold of it entirely, and the government has nothing to do with it, or, at any rate, very little; and some barracks, where we strolled in past the sentinel, who was asleep with his ear against the muzzle of his gun, and stared and were stared at by the soldiers who were lounging about, till a major-general, or some other great dignitary, came and asked us our business, to which we replied nothing, and strolled out again: and a market, which for dirt and smell was a disgrace to any country calling itself civilized, but which, if it underwent a thorough Augean purification, would be a very fine place: and some gardens with a grotto in them, up which I climbed, and then slipped down and hurt my elbow, and dropped the umbrella into a cataract, and my friend had to

get it out again; and then we went back and had some dinner at another restaurant, and my friend put me into a boat, and told the pirate to whom it belonged to take me to the *Tagus*, which, after we had been indignantly repudiated by several other ships which we tried,—and had been hotly pursued by the harbour-police, who wanted to know what we wanted out at that time of night, and who would have undoubtedly caught us and conveyed us away to languish in a Rio de Janeiran dungeon, had it not been that their boat was propelled by men of the Imperial Navy, and mine wasn't, so that we progressed, while they remained stationary,—he at last did. I gave him all the Brazilian money I had left, and my blessing, which, now I come to think of it, must have been a great deal more than I ought to have, and went up the ladder, where I found all the others, who had not heard of the ship's departure being postponed, and so had had to kick their heels on the quarter-deck all the afternoon, which had not improved their tempers, though why they should have vented their feelings on me, I don't know.

I had left my bag behind, as the office was closed when we had gone back for it; but the umbrella was safe, and the ceremony of restoring it took place that evening. It was unanimously voted in the Debating Society that the man who can travel in a foreign country with somebody else's umbrella, and remember to restore it, is worthy to be trusted with untold gold.

No one would try the experiment, however.

CHAPTER XV.

MONOTONY, VARIED WITH A PAMPERO.

My friend came to bid me good-bye next morning, and brought my bag off. And so we parted, and I went downstairs and indexed him, as I found it necessary to do now; I was getting so many friends, distributed about all over the world.

The winch worked hard all night, and succeeded very satisfactorily, so far as keeping us awake went, but we didn't get all the coffee in after all; so Archatt and I spent the overplus time fishing over the stern. There is excellent fishing to be got in the harbour, among the other inestimable natural advantages that it possesses. Some people have been known to pull up fish as fast as they put their lines down, just fishing off the stern, as we were doing; the chief officer said he had frequently seen it done. The peculiar sort of fish there is indigenous to the place. It is about the size of a sardine, and tastes like a red herring. I booked this among my natural history notes, but I only had it from hearsay; for ourselves, none of us caught anything, unless we could count a custom-house officer, who was fooling about in a boat below, and whom Archatt hooked somewhere about the tail of his coat. Archatt

was fishing with a small shark-hook. He said he didn't expect the Rio de Janeiran fish to swallow it down all at once; he only wanted it to fix itself accurately on the point. At any rate, it had a very telling effect on the customs officer, and Archatt had to apologize as much as he could; otherwise he might have been shot for trying to tamper with a government official.

The coffee was at last all on board, and the last custom-house officer persuaded to leave the ship; the old Brazilian flag, that looks more like a trade-mark than anything else, and is particularly appropriate for a ready-made concern like the Empire, was hauled down, and we started on the final stage of our journey.

Everything seemed to be changed now. We had all been spoilt by going on shore for so long, and having had the existence of other humans besides ourselves recalled to our minds, and now that there didn't seem any more need to keep on our best behaviour, we relapsed into our old individual habits, be they good, bad, or indifferent.

A lot of our passengers had left us at Rio; most of the Portuguese, and many of the English. Mrs. Banner and her daughter had gone away, and several who had just come on board at Bahia and Pernambuco for a few days' trip down the coast.

I don't think anything very particular happened that night, except that I sat out late on deck, and got well soaked with dew. The natural consequence was symptoms of a cold. The doctor poured some more things into me to stop it, but they had no effect; and when I woke next morning I felt

I was well in for a bad cold in my head. And go where you will, a cold in the head is a cold in the head all the world over, and makes one miserable. I was never happy again during the remainder of the voyage.

We got to Santos next day. Of course I wasn't up to see us enter the river. I have already given my ideas as to such frivolities; and besides, now I always had to wait every morning till the doctor had been in and thought over me, and decided what experiment he would try on me that morning; so that I couldn't perhaps have got up, if I had wanted to. This morning, I remember, he said my leg was indolent, and wanted stimulating. He then went and mixed up the contents of a cruet-stand, rather giving preference to the cayenne pepper, and came and applied the compound to me. If I hadn't been brought up on the strictest moral principles, I should have said something; as it was, my leg became so active that it required all the joint efforts of the doctor and myself to prevent it kicking out and hitting him in the eye.

We did not stop long at Santos, but all the passengers but Mr. Le Trant and myself thought it necessary to go on shore, and climb a hill behind the town, to see a view. We sat on deck and watched them toiling up. Santos is, or is to be, the Liverpool of Brazil. The town doesn't seem at present to be very large, or at all clean; it lies about six miles up a river from the sea, and it is surrounded by fever-breeding mango-swamps. There is a tramway from the town to the sea-

shore, to enable the natives to get some pure air sometimes.

The excursion party returned all very hot and rather out of temper, and Mr. Le Trant and I felt in a position to point out to them the folly of the proceeding, which they resented, and replied to rudely, and then it was our turn to be offended. It was certainly high time for the voyage to come to an end.

Mr. Elborough left us at Santos, and we dipped the flag to him when the captain wasn't looking. The quartermaster, however, saw us, and threatened us with instant execution at the yard-arm, but he proved open to argument when it was enforced by a small impromptu subscription which was got up in honour of his next birthday, and we heard no more about it. We saluted again as we passed the Santos fort, but the garrison was asleep on the battlements, and didn't return our courtesy. It is funny to think that we might have gone to war for that two centuries ago.

The people who came off to see the ship at Santos had said we were going to have a Pampero when we got out to sea. The captain looked at his glass, and said there was a Pampero coming, and put on his old hat and coat; and all the way out I remembered to have heard people saying what a splendid passage we were having, but the great danger at that time of year was when we came to the region of Pamperos. I asked several people what one was to expect from a Pampero? what was the exact estimate of its force? but they only looked grave and said, "You

wait, and you'll see." I asked the Captain if the sea ran "mountains high," as that was a term I was rather beginning not to believe in; but he only shook his head as if a Pampero was a thing not to be treated with anything approaching frivolity.

I went down to dinner, and the uncle regaled us with choice stories of how he had known the whole of a ship's crew being left without a hair on their heads, and with all their teeth driven backward down their throats, after beating against a Pampero for two days; and the engineer corroborated this by saying he had been there himself, only, his duties not requiring him to be on deck so much, he had escaped with the loss of only one tooth. Then the chief officer recollected having seen the swinging dumb-waiters in the saloon touching the ceiling, owing to the rolling of the ship. Mr. Farphar noted down all these particulars, as likely to be useful for a work he was preparing "On the Atmosphere under Different Conditions;" and the bridegroom recommended his bride to tie her hair on tighter when she went on deck.

The Pampero hadn't begun when we looked out after dinner, but it had turned very cold, with lots of dew, so we passed the rest of the evening below, still talking rather gloomily about Pamperos, till the ladies declared they felt the ship beginning to pitch, and retired. In the after-gangway another discussion was going on on the same subject, and the end of it was I went to bed with very tolerable notions of what a Pampero should be. I drafted my will and got into bed, and

secured myself as tightly as possible with my portmanteau-straps and my braces to my berth. If the ship turned bottom upwards, as it seemed likely it would, I didn't want to be continually banging my nose against the ceiling.

I found, on awaking in the morning, that the Pampero had commenced in the middle of the night, and had already attained to about half speed. Things were just about beginning to look lively. I undid myself as fast as I could, and by a skilful manœuvre in six distinct directions at once, managed to save four out of nine articles that had begun their rambles round the cabin. Having secured these, I tried to return to my berth, but this wasn't so easy. I am not fond of Alpine climbing, and even if I were, I don't know whether that would have been of much use in helping one to climb up a smooth perpendicular surface like the cabin floor, with only one leg to do it with, and medicine-bottles hurling themselves at one from all the shelves and brackets around. And then, when I was half-way up the ascent, the whole thing suddenly sloped up the other way, and I found myself at the bottom of the hill on my head. Then I turned and tried to remount that way, and so on *da capo* till I would have liked to have given it up and sat down in despair, if I only could. I must have spent nearly half an hour trying to get into bed again, and then the door flew open, and the steward shot in with my morning tea, and while he was trying to get out again the doctor dropped in to experiment, which only complicated matters worse.

There was a marked falling off in the number of visible passengers the whole of the next two days. Those bolder ones who ventured on deck soon came down reporting the awning all taken in, and the impossibility of keeping one's feet, so we contented ourselves with getting through the day as best we could downstairs. A farewell number of the *Gazette* had been promised, but now we deliberated if we couldn't bring a Pampero under the heading of "barratry," or some of those other wonderful contingencies that the R.M. Co. won't guarantee against, and so get out of it that way; but honour prevailed, and so the Farewell Double Number of the *Tagus Gazette* appeared, a triumph of perseverance and bad grammar, which latter was of course charitably attributed to "circumstances," in the midst of the ravings of this scourge of the Atlantic, the Pampero.

We were all more or less demoralized and casting about for something to do. There were no ladies to talk to. Mr. Vestry and Mr. Le Trant went into a corner and whispered over their business. Mr. Farphar busied himself with "Some Notes on the Currents in the Plate, and whether the past indifference to them has had any influence on the more juvenile Argentines, with sundry examples deduced from the earlier history of the connection between atmospheric and moral phenomena." Archatt teased the cat, and thought out funny things for the *Gazette*, in case we were cast away, and should have to bring out another number after all to solace us on some desert island. Ockern, having played all the pretence of

tune out of the piano during the voyage, thought he couldn't do less than put some in again, and went in search of the carpenter to borrow his port-hole key for that purpose; the uncle button-holed the bridegroom, and pointed out the folly of marriage as opposed to a perfect state of wet blankets and health, and that his only chance was for him and his wife to feed on nothing but brown biscuits; while I spent the afternoon happily in my cabin looking for something, and came away at dinner-time without the slightest notion what it was.

The ship had adopted an entirely new motion under the Pampero's influence; it was a sort of half-and-half between a pitch and a roll; a wriggle that made one look out for one of these and then suddenly changed itself into the other, and took a mean advantage of one. This was particularly dangerous at dinner-time, as one calculated for the pitch or the roll, as the case might be, in aiming one's food at one's mouth, and then came the Pampero-wriggle and took it into one's eye, if it didn't go so far as to more likely take it into one's neighbour's mouth. Of course the fiddles were on, but still the meal-time was very dangerous.

The screw every now and then kept heaving out of the water; what the engineer called the "slip." The engineer was not in the best of tempers himself; somebody hinted he would be called over the coals, and he got quite peevish over it. Clearly Pamperos must have some effect on the morals.

On the last morning but two the doctor told me that there was but one hope left for me, and that that consisted in my lying perfectly still for the

rest of the voyage. He accordingly took me off to his cabin, a funny little place fitted up with all conveniences, and with corkscrews and other surgical instruments, hanging about the walls, and fixed me up with about the fifteenth new plan, and then returned me to my cabin with an injunction to stay quiet.

I should have done this with the greatest pleasure, but fate ruled contrary to my wishes. A mosquito had somehow smuggled himself into my bag when I had left it unguarded at Rio, and had come on board in it. I had heard him about occasionally since then, and he had annoyed me a good deal, but beyond a grab or two at him as he passed, I had not troubled myself much about catching him. Now I had been lying dozing in my berth all that day, and I awoke about half-past four with a feeling of something heavy on my chest. At first I thought it must be something I had had at breakfast, or perhaps one of the captain's cats had got in, but as I regained more and more consciousness, I became aware that it was the mosquito sitting on the outside of my rug, and grinning fiendishly at me as he prepared to suck my life-blood. I made a dash at him, but he eluded me and flew to the other side of the cabin. I followed him, and got my crutch and dealt violent blows at him, and knocked over two medicine-bottles. Then the ship gave a wriggle, and I got mixed up with a camp-stool and fell on the floor. End of round one.

I changed the crutch for my sword-stick, and prowled round the cabin after him *à la* Corsican

brothers. I made a lunge at him at last, and narrowly missed him, and my weapon entered deeply into the side of the ship. When I drew it out again the water followed. I stopped up the hole with a medicine-bottle cork and returned to the combat.

This time I took both the crutch and sword-stick, and by skilful manœuvring at last hemmed him up into a corner. One blow and all was over. My enemy darted one last glance of hatred at me and then his eyes closed to open no more. I felt one pang for his bravery, but it was almost immediately counteracted by the thought that he and his race had in my time injured me more than even his death could atone for, and that it would have been a well-deserved punishment if I had tied him down in a bed and buzzed round and round his head till he was finally exasperated to death that way. And this was such an unconstitutional mosquito. I hate anomalies. I don't mind mid-winter as hot as summer, but when it includes mosquitoes it is going too far.

The Pampero had finished itself by next morning, and one by one the company appeared again, all looking very yellow, and all anxiously inquiring how long we should be getting to Monte Video. We were very much behindhand, but expected to be there sometime between this noon and next, and everybody began to busy themselves with final preparations. The engineer disappeared all day; someone said he had gone to sit on the safety-valve; and when he did come to dinner he looked very hot and uncomfortable, and was not at all inclined to talk.

We held our last meeting in the gangway that night, as we should have no time for one on the next, made the usual arrangements for sealing mutual friendships, sang "Auld Lang Syne" all over again, and turned in. And the beat of the screw seemed changed as it throbbed along that night. Now it kept on repeating, "Nearly there, nearly there;" and it sounded as if it was glad its work was coming to a close.

CHAPTER XVI.

SENDING EVERYBODY ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS.

I BEGAN to feel my loneliness again as soon as we got to Monte Video next day. Many of the passengers had now returned to the bosoms of their friends, but there were none of those sort of things for me to return to, so while everybody was welcoming everybody, I felt rather out in the cold. I looked up at the mast, and there was the Banda Oriental flag, a lively representation of a sunflower with a very chubby face in the middle of it, and I felt what it was to be a lone stranger in a foreign land; but I struggled against it bravely, and selecting the most respectable-looking peon on the tender that had come alongside, waved to him in token of my good feeling towards the country in general. I had quite given up obeying the doctor by this time, as I found it quite impossible to keep quiet with all this new excitement going on around.

We were at Monte Video on a Sunday—we usually got to these big places on a Sunday—but the working of the winch, and the general un-Sunday-like appearance of things made us so forget the fact that Miss Vestry and I innocently

sat down on the saloon skylights to a quiet game of beggar-my-neighbour. The captain went to his cabin, and, it was said, had a fit, and many of the passengers and visitors, when someone remembered it was Sunday, fainted in heaps about the deck, and I went down and hid my face in my cabin, feeling that I was branded for ever. After half an hour's penitence, however, I ventured on deck again, and finding every one had recovered themselves, sat down and twiddled my thumbs, and felt quite good all the afternoon.

I had finally determined, after much talking and thinking over it, to go on to Buenos Ayres after all. To begin with, it was nearer the people I was going to, though it was in a different republic; then all my present friends were going there, and it would be jollier living with them than by myself, while I was waiting for directions how to get into the interior; and another thing was that I wanted to be perfectly well before going up there, as I was sure I should be more welcome sound than in the dilapidated state I was then in; and if I had to lie up, it would be nicer amongst my fellow-passengers, who had got used to me as an invalid; so all being considered, I paid the difference and stuck to the ship.

It was a great race against time as to whether the cargo could be got out, so that we should have water enough to take us on to Buenos Ayres before it was all blown out of the river by the stiff west wind then blowing, and not have to wait till some of it liked to come back again, which goodness knew when it might be, as they don't keep tides

out in those parts—they are too poor yet. Only a few people landed, therefore, and then they only had about two hours on shore. We got a third addition to the ranks of the cripples in the person of one of these people, who sprained his ankle coming up the steps. He was stretched out on deck, and Mr. Le Trant and I admitted him to our fraternity. The doctor said he had never known such an epidemic of bad legs on board any of the R.M. boats he had sailed on before.

The winches worked hard all night again, but we didn't leave till five next morning. I kept constantly waking in the night. I didn't mind the winches so much as most people, as I had had two nights of them to their one at Rio, and I think I could have slept with twenty winches close to my ear, but the absence of the screw disturbed me. I went out several times to the bottom of the companion-stairs to see what o'clock it was, and the last time I met someone else, and we both fled, and next morning there were complaints of ghosts about the ship. At last the screw started again, but we were well on the mud, careening all over to one side, and ploughing along as if we were in a field. With full speed, the engineer told me next day, we were only making six knots an hour.

I was particularly curious to see where they packed all the machinery to, and the engineer had promised me that I should go down and see them for myself. Now on the last day, when I had donned my best clothes and cleaned myself up to make a first and good impression on the Buenos

Ayrians, the vanishing engineer's man was sent to tell me everything had been nicely swept and garnished for my reception, and the second engineer would be happy to conduct me over his premises. The doctor didn't want me to go, as he wanted to stick to his treasure to the last, but I didn't want to disappoint the engineer, so after trying in vain to induce the doctor to come too, I got Ockern, as the next best thing; and when we had descended a series of iron stairs, till we had arrived somewhere considerably below the level of the keel, we found ourselves in the engine-room. There was such a banging and crashing about of things, going in and out and up and down, that I could hardly catch a word of what our guide explained to us, so had to be satisfied with looking at the engines from a purely poetical point of view, and reflecting how vast was the ingenuity of man, who could thus control the elements to his service, and all that sort of thing, and resolve to read up in books how he managed to do it afterwards. However, though I couldn't follow the ins and outs of the pipes and cylinders and wheels that served to communicate the motion, I made out which was the handle that had to be pulled to make the whole thing go on, so I did learn something that might be useful in an emergency, at any rate. The engineer showed us some minor accessories, such as steam-condensers, and other trifling inventions to be used in case the bottom of the ship was blown out, &c., &c., and then we walked along a sort of gallery like the interior of a coal-mine, along one side of which the shaft of the

screw ran. We went right to the end of the ship under the saloon, with the shaft worming itself alongside of us like some great beast engaged on some business of its own.

We came back and went down more steps into the stoke-hole. Here was a place much larger than the ship, stowed away somewhere at the bottom, with eight or ten boilers in it, with furnaces under them, and tall figures like demons feeding the flames. We didn't stop there long; it was too hot. The very stokers can only stand it for two hours at a time, and what it must be in the Tropics I can't imagine; and yet I noticed one very corpulent stoker.

We came up again in rather a dirty state, and I went to pack with my steward's help, who was prepared, if I hadn't checked him in the bud, to regale me with a second, and I daresay very much revised edition of his life and impressions. We parted the best of friends, nevertheless, and I promised to come back with him, and again entrust myself to his care.

We got to the Buenos Ayres Roads at three, but we had to wait for some time till we were seen from the shore, and the Visit came off. We hoisted another eccentric flag in honour of Buenos Ayres, and put ourselves into nominal quarantine till we were inspected, though what for I don't know, unless it was for game legs. We spent the afternoon very mournfully; we were all very sorry to leave the old ship, and we particularly regretted having to do so before the dinner-hour, as there were rumours of partridges having been seen coming on board. I exchanged cards with Mr.

Farphar, the Le Trants, and all the officers, and at the end of the voyage was plus thirty friends to what I had been at the beginning.

"They," that mysterious body of individuals who seem to regulate so much of our worldly business, whom the French call "One," and the Germans "Man," seemed to be in a great hurry to get us off the ship as soon as possible after the Visit had been on board and pronounced us clean—which was more than they were themselves,—and the tender that was to take us away kept blowing all its whistles, of which it appeared to have an octave, and making all the other available noises it could to frighten us into believing that if we didn't look sharp it would start without us; but once it had got us safely established on it, it took no further steps to proceed, and hung on to the ship for upwards of half an hour. We had all taken leave of the officers before coming down the ladder, but now we were reduced to the painful necessity of passing the time by a dismal interchange of chaff with them as they scoffed at us over the taffrail. Now and then the tender would give a little lurch forward, and some one would jump up and say, "Now, three last cheers for the captain and crew of the *Tagus!*" but then he would find the start was a false one, and had to sit down and look rather a fool. And our feelings were not improved by the dinner-bell ringing, and the engineer disappearing below to partake of those partridges all to himself. But whatever it was that had been keeping us was at last got over; the pilot had said his last cautions

to the captain, and the head-steward had reported none of the spoons missing, and there appearing now no just cause or impediment to stop us any longer, the tender gave a final whistle and clanged a final bell, and her crew of two men and a half—he wasn't a boy—joined in a final yell, the hawsers were cast off, and we started for shore. Then we did cheer, and this time had the satisfaction of knowing that it was not for nothing.

I was to meet the Le Trants and Vestrys, who had gone on before in a private launch, at the hotel; meanwhile I had put myself under the special charge of Archatt, who, being a resident of Buenos Ayres, had undertaken to see I arrived all right, and get me through the custom-house, and take care I wasn't run in for a suspicious-looking character, and anything of that kind that might be required. He showed me some of the style of money they use out there, all bank-notes, and asked if I should prefer taking charge of my own expenses, but I felt the undertaking was too vast for me to grasp all at once, and that I must shut myself up for a whole day to master the monetary system of the country before I ventured on paying anything for myself; so I said I would rather he lumped his expenses and mine all together, and I would trust in his honesty and pay him next day.

The passage to the shore was very long; the great characteristic of the harbour of Buenos Ayres is that there isn't one, and no ship of respectable draught can come within fifteen miles of the city, so that it takes nearly two hours to

get on shore, with a favourable wind, which there wasn't when we landed; it was blowing right in our teeth, and very cold too; probably the south-west wind, as everything goes by contraries in the Plate. I got colder and colder, and more and more miserable; this part of the voyage seemed worse than the whole of it put together, and about twice as long. At last I could bear it no longer, and as there was no cabin to retire to, I went and sat on the boiler, which protruded through the deck, with my back against the funnel, till I began to feel the vital spark that had nearly entirely gone out reviving into a flame.

There was some doubt amongst those who knew the place as to how we were finally to get on shore. Amongst the other special advantages that this flourishing port presents, is a glorious uncertainty about the possibility of landing. It has a special process of its own, more or less modified according to circumstances. The full course is as follows:—First, the passenger gets into the tender, which takes him as far as it can and deposits him in a whaleboat; then the whale-boat shunts him into a smaller boat, whence he is received into a cart; the cart goes on a little further to where men are ready to take him on their backs, and for the last few yards to the shore he has to wade. When the whole of this is in full working order, he must consign his luggage to the care of a special providence; however, it generally turns up, minus a very small percentage, at some time or other, and a little patience is good for everybody.

We only got as far as the whaleboats in the performance, and they took us up to the Mole. Several of Archatt's friends came in the boat to welcome him, and he introduced me to all of them. It was perfectly dark, and I could not catch half their names. I should like to have had the use of a little daylight, so that I might have put them down with an accurate description of their characteristic features; but as it was, these introductions ended in my knowing a large quantity of the Buenos Ayrian *jeunesse dorée* without being at the same time able to tell t'other from which, or any of them from Adam.

The custom-house out there has taken to the early-closing system, and the officials positively refused to see any of our things that night; but Archatt had a friend in power who mentioned incidentally that if there was any trifle we particularly wanted for the night, no one would interfere with our carrying it through. I wasn't quite sure in which of my packages I had put my toilette arrangements; in fact, I rather believed I had carefully distributed them about each; so I made a shot at the ones I believed my sponge and tooth-brush to be in, trusted to luck for my comb, and forewent all hopes of a night-shirt, unless by good fortune there should happen to be one got in with the other things, and in all found that the permission thus given us would enable me to pass most of my baggage through that night. One of my new friends then offered to collect my property for me, and lit a match, and plunging into the hold, began routing about among

the explosives that had come out of the ship's magazine. I immediately begged him on no account to trouble himself about it; I had already found one or two things on deck that I thought might answer my purposes, and in my present state of uncertainty it was perfectly immaterial to me which I took; so he threw down his match on the top of a chest of cartridges, put his foot on to a case of percussion-caps, and sprang on to the deck again. I could have admired his coolness if I hadn't been so mixed up in it.

I was helped into the boat, and we rowed to the Mole; the boat jumped up and down in a most inconvenient manner, and I didn't dare step off for some time. But the moment arrived; I put out one leg, and as the boat sunk from beneath the other, and I clung on to the post at the bottom of the wide steps, I felt that the first stage of my troubles was over.

ENTR'ACTE.

FOR five weeks had I been writing without intermission, sleeping little, eating little, moving not from my desk, only intent on the work set before me. And now I had reached this point a craving seized me for the society of my fellow-creatures, and I threw down the remains of my pen, and pushed back my chair, to which I had been as it were glued all this time, and I said, "I will write no more; no, not if all the highest born dames or damosels in merry England were to come and kneel down before me in rows, and entreat me to do so." Then I rose and looked in the glass, and behold! I knew not the form that appeared therein. The face of it was lean and haggard, and the figure of it was wasted, and the clothes on it hung even as clothes do when elevated on a broomstick to scare away the rapacious fowls of the air from the crops of the agriculturists; and I said, "This must not be; I will go out and take the air."

And when I had got outside my door, lo! a crowd of anxious females, each with her purse in her hand, waiting for me, and they said, "Is it done?" And I said, "No, it is not done, and what is more, it never will be done." And they screamed at me, and I ran away.

Then I wandered on through the busy haunts

of men, and went to balls and theatres, and I returned to Cambridge, and read books, and took notes, and I went into a place with benches and desks, and wrote for thirty hours, and I gained a certain honour which is called a Degree. And then I came home again, and one day I met a doctor who said, "You are ill." Then said I, "What must I do?" And he said, "You must not read, nor write, nor do arithmetic." So I knew that the best thing for me would be to choose one of these three things; and I hired a little lodging over a man who could not make up his mind on which he made the worst noises, the violin, or the cornet-à-piston, or the flageolet; and I bought some more pens and paper, and wrote again.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALL ABROAD.

WE climbed up to the top of the Mole, and then we had to walk some little way along it before we really arrived at Buenos Ayrian soil proper. This Mole is one of the far-famed things about Buenos Ayres, that is, any one who knows, or wants to pretend to know anything about Buenos Ayres, has to know about the Mole. It is rather rickety, and very full of holes. I believe it is the customary thing for the unwary traveller on his first arrival to fall through and be killed; at least, I was told it had been done two or three times. However, I didn't; I left it for some of the others.

We crossed a railway that ran in a casual sort of way, with no particular palings or anything to keep the people off—Buenos Ayres is a free country, and if people like to be run over, they may—and then we went on a little further till we came under a kind of indistinct coruscation flickering up in the air, which proved to be a gas lamp. Further conviction was unnecessary of how much I had been mistaken in my estimation of Buenos Ayrian civilization; they must have advanced very far, even as far as gas companies (limited).

To those who knew, this gas lamp served as a landmark for the entrance of a street—it was pitch dark by this time, so something of the sort was needed. The street, up which we now went, was very steep, and I was much struck with the pavement; I tripped up over some of the many stones that stuck up above the others, and hurt my hands and knees. I had some difficulty in walking at all at first, as I had only two hands, and something to carry in each, as well as to support myself along the perils of the way with my walking-stick; but presently two of my new friends took charge of my baggage, and a third of myself, so I was relieved of all my cares, and we got at last safely to the hotel.

Archatt took me into the *escritoire*, and negociated in Spanish for me with the head man for a room. Then he put himself and all my new friends entirely at my service for the next day, and bade me good-night. I was a little nervous how I was to get on by myself in a place where I was unintelligible; however, I thought I might as well give my French a chance before becoming for ever silent, so I tackled the head man again. He extricated a meaning from my sentence after a little consideration, and then answered me in the very best Parisian. He was a Frenchman born; and what was more, so were the waiter who showed me to my room, and the boots who carried up my things, and the other waiters when I came down again. Now I rejoiced in spirit: I couldn't starve so long as there was a *biftek* and *pommes de terre* in the house, with *du vin* and *café au lait*—or

without *lait*, as the case might be—even if I couldn't run to other luxuries. I dined with the Vestrys that evening, who were putting up at the same hotel, and after dinner, when Mr. Vestry and I had sat out a cigar, I went out for a little stroll, but not very far, for fear of not being able to find my way back in Spanish. On my return I found a night-shirt squeezed in amongst my rugs, and went to bed.

Next morning when I had got up, I investigated the placard hung up in my room with regulations in five different languages as to what the "voyager shall or shall not do," and the various arrangements for his comfort, or otherwise; and from the French section, for there was no making anything out of the English, I discovered that the hours for meals were from 9 to 12 a.m., and from 4.30 to 7.30 p.m., with all sorts of pains and penalties to be visited on the hapless violater of their punctuality. As it was only about seven by the time I was dressed, I went out for another walk. The trams, which seemed as plentiful here as in Rio, had begun to run, but I did not yet dare venture myself on one; first, because I had none of the current coin of the Republic in my pocket, and next because I was afraid of being carried goodness knows whither, and becoming a sort of tram Flying Dutchman, condemned to wander up and down for ever, in search of a tram to take me home. So I refrained from any internal experiments with respect to trams, and after two or three external ones, in the way of seriously imperilling my life by getting in their way as they

suddenly came round the corner, I returned home to breakfast.

The Vestrys had not yet recovered from their fatigues of the day before, so I breakfasted by myself. I had some very remarkable things for that breakfast, but I asked no questions, and spoke little at all, till at the end I asked for two eggs, on which the waiter started back as if in amazement, and exclaimed at my appetite; and it was only by the aid of signs and the requisite number of toothpicks, that I succeeded in relieving him of his erroneous impression that I wanted twelve. I was surprised myself; I had always understood before that my pronunciation was so remarkably good.

Archatt turned up later on, and we went down to the custom-house together to get what things I hadn't passed through the night before. The only thing in my baggage the officials couldn't quite grasp the meaning of was my pocket filter; they examined it all over, and were doubtful whether they oughtn't to seize on it as an infernal machine. I explained it to them, and by putting the end of the tube into my mouth, contrived to get it through as a musical instrument. Then they obligingly replaced the straps of my portmanteau into the wrong buckles for me, and left me for an investigation of Archatt's baggage.

As Archatt had been so kind as to help me, it was but natural that I should wish to do something for him, so at his request I sat myself down on a large wooden box that bore his name in large and conspicuous letters on the top. I sat there about

an hour and a half, while he went about trying to get hold of an official to examine this and another box of the same sort. It happened to be the custom-house breakfast-time, and in no country can the majesty of the law be disturbed at its meals.

Still my time was not wasted. I picked up a good deal in the anthropological line while I was waiting. Every sort of nationality was represented there: English, Irish, Welsh, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Swiss, and they all talked each other's language, and none of them their own perfectly. The only way to tell which of them is what, is to watch the gesticulations—taking an average sentence and dividing it into the number of gesticulations made during its execution. The Englishman makes least, and the Spaniard most, of the pure races; but for a really good gesticulating sentence I can recommend the native Buenos Ayrian "Good-morning." Probably the reason is he has a proportion of all the other bloods in him, and so combines all the other nations' gesticulations. He begins by standing "'Tention," then as soon as he gets to work he commences waving his arms about like a semaphore in sixteen distinct actions, and after that is all over he returns to the "'Tention" again. One would almost think he might have dispensed with the elocutory part of it altogether, if it is an understood thing what he means by his actions. There is a reply code, but I had hardly time to study its details.

While upon the subject, I may as well remark that I am half inclined to believe that foreigners

have invented gesticulations because they wouldn't otherwise always understand each other. I know I have found the system very useful when at a loss for a word in a foreign country: for instance, if I want something, and remember the rest of the sentence all but the particular word for the thing itself, I run on as far as I can, and then shrug my shoulders and make a kind of Catherine-wheel in the air with my hand, and say, "Comme ça, vous savez, n'est-ce pas?" and I usually get what I want in the end; though sometimes, indeed, two or three other things have to be brought on approval first. There are exceptions, too, of course, when it is something very much out of the way. Now one can't do that with English; no waiter would understand I wanted a fork or a napkin, not if I made Catherine-wheels for a month; and if I said, "You know," he probably wouldn't know. But foreign languages are complex like Chinese; there is one for talking and one for gesticulating. I don't think, though, there is any gesticulation for salt-spoon; I've never been able to procure one that way.

When I was almost tired of waiting, and had smoked fifteen cigarettes, and it was only my desire to show Archatt how intense was my gratitude to him for all the kindness he had shown me, in return for which I was ready, if needed, to sit on any number of hard boxes for any number of hours, that prevented me from going away, he returned with an official, and when I had removed from my box, they proceeded to prize it open. Inside there was an English saddle. Archatt first pointed to the saddle and then to me, then

said something in Spanish, and the official looked out something's or somebody's description in a book, which didn't seem to satisfy him. Archatt said some more Spanish and added a few more gesticulations of a persuasive character, and the official banged the top of the box down and went away, and wouldn't have anything more to do with it. Archatt said it was all right, and we could come on. I couldn't help fancying I had been made party to defrauding the Buenos Ayrian revenue in some way or other. Conscience, at least, taxed me with it, but there, as I said at the time, Conscience didn't know any more Spanish than I did, so how on earth was it to know?

Archatt then had to leave me, and go to his business, and as I also had a little of my own to transact, I took this opportunity. Mine was merely this: I had a letter of credit in my pocket to a firm in Buenos Ayres, which I found on arrival had smashed up some five years before—so it was just a matter of my having exactly £7 10*s.* in my pocket to go on with till a letter from me should have had time to get home, and I could get an answer with another letter of credit, or some other means of raising funds. If I had been a youth in one of Mr. Smiles' books, I should have set to work at once, although perhaps £7 10*s.* would be almost a disadvantageous sum to possess as being rather too large, and ended by making a colossal fortune; but I had a letter of introduction to the bank manager, not *quâ* bank manager, but purely as a friend, and I thought it wouldn't be at all a bad way of opening an acquaintance to ask

him to lend me some money to start with. I had, by the way, talked it over with the hotel-keeper while waiting for my breakfast, partly to polish up my French, and partly because I did not wish to surprise him too much all at once when at some subsequent time he should find me unable to pay my bill. I had had some little difficulty in explaining to him that I was "*sur un arbre*," and when that seemed to fail to convey any very definite idea to him, I substituted another idiom of much the same purport, "*dans un trou*," but he didn't take that in either, so I had to explain my situation more periphrastically. He said he had no doubt it would be all right, but to make things quite pleasant, we had come to an agreement for me to put myself in pawn till my money arrived. Still he recommended me to try the letter of introduction to the bank, and he thought it would answer, and it would be much better for me to have some money.

He was quite right. The general picturesqueness and unpretendingness of my appearance—I had on my white hat and light suit—most people about were in their winter clothing—the plausibility of my tale, and last, but not least, my letter of introduction, all served to touch a chord in the bank manager's heart, and he immediately ordered his chief clerk to honour my letter of credit, and set me up in funds. The clerk came back with such an armful of bank-notes, that I became alarmed, and said I had not come out all that way with the intention of breaking the bank at the first start; but the manager assured me it

was all right, and gave me a few outlines of the monetary system of the country, so I believed him, and squeezed all the bank-notes into my pocket-book, at a considerable risk to the strap. Then, not wishing to detain the manager any longer, as I had got all I wanted for the present, I returned to my hotel, grasping my swordstick tight with one hand, and the pocket in which all my wealth was with the other, and not feeling anything like safe till I had got up into my room and locked the door.

But now that 'blessed old Nemesis of mine turned up again. I had been rather over-doing my leg during the transaction of all these different businesses, and it began to feel uncomfortable; indeed it felt exactly as if it was coming off, a most inconvenient thing for it to do right away out there, where everything has to be imported, and they might charge anything they liked for a new one. But there was no help for it. I must put myself into the hands of another doctor; not that I minded so much now, as I had long since realized that I can never be free of doctors. It is my fate, not my hobby; theoretically, I am always in a state of perfect health; practically, my normal state is to be under a doctor. It is never through any fault of my own, but destiny will have it so, and in whatever part of the world I happen to be, if there is a doctor within a hundred miles of the place, it inevitably drives me—yes, hounds me on—into his arms. I believe if I went somewhere into the wilds of the Rocky Mountains, and a medicine-man chanced

to be there, I should have to consult him. I have been a perfect fortune to the faculty, a regular circulating medium.

I borrowed a directory of the hotel-keeper, and fixed on two or three names of doctors, and then went out on my search. I overshot the first I had marked down, but it was perfectly immaterial to me—it could only be a variation of the same misfortune—so I went on to the next. Nothing looks so foolish and attracts so much attention to oneself in a strange town as to wander up and down a street looking at the numbers, as if one didn't exactly know the house one was looking for by sight.

The doctor was at home. Some unknown cause prompted me to adopt a foreign accent and say, "You speak Ingleesh," to which he replied with a most unmistakable "Yis, Sorr-rr," and then asked me what he could do for me. I told him what he was to do, and he did it; and then told me what I knew before, that there was nothing for it but perfect rest for a week, and he would come round and see me next day. But he wasn't going to let me off as easily as that. Buenos Ayres is too healthy, and doctors don't often get a victim; he began cross-examining me. But I was tired of this. I had come out for health and pleasure, and a deal to escape from my doctors in England, not to see more doctors here—at least so I had proposed—so I told him flatly that I had engaged him to repair my leg, and I didn't want him to undertake my head or any other part of my constitution; and he saw from

my countenance that I meant what I said. I wished him good-afternoon and returned home.

Then I unpacked my books and prepared for a week's confinement in the hotel. I read twenty-three pages of "Lothair" that evening, and slept soundly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TAKING MINE EASE IN MINE INN.

FRENCH hotel life in Buenos Ayres is very much like the same thing anywhere else, and as I wanted to get well as soon as possible, I stopped in a great deal, so didn't see very much outside the actual premises. I used to draw an arm-chair I had found behind my window-curtains, and had managed to make stand upright with the aid of a portmanteau, to the window, and sit with my leg cocked up on another chair, and look out. My window opened on to a large sort of space with glass over the top, round which space the hotel had been built, and in the middle of which was a pavilion like an Egyptian temple, where the newspapers were supposed to be kept, though I never succeeded, when I did go down and search occasionally, in finding one of a later date than an *Illustrirte Zeitung* of a year and a half standing. There were four palm-trees at the angles of the temple, and two rocking-chairs stood where the Sphinxes would have been in the ordinary thing. A rock in these chairs—with my bad leg stuck straight out—before coming up again after meals now became my main form of exercise.

Though it couldn't be called strictly manners and customs, there was a good deal of life, and some noise, to observe during the day in the court. It usually began by the big door of the hotel opening with a loud bang at some unearthly hour in the morning and awakening me. It wasn't light, but no estimate of the hour could be formed from that, as they don't keep a dawn in that country. Some one would come in and have an altercation with the porter, who would finally bang to the doors again, but whether he left the other person inside or out, I never had the curiosity to look to see. Then about an hour and a half after that, voices would come from somewhere into the court, and disperse about it in different sets of altercations; then the doors, I suppose, having been again opened, but not with quite so perceptible a noise, other people would come in from the street and join in. I never knew such a place as that hotel for altercating. It didn't seem to require any special introduction to be allowed the *entrée;* any sort of people who had anything on their minds could drop in and vent their feelings on one of the waiters if they could get hold of him; and the echoes into that glass roof were awful. But quite the senior wrangler, and the one who could keep it up longest without showing any signs of flagging, was the hotel-keeper himself. He was at it from morning to night, and as soon as he had polished off one adversary then he was ready for another.

There was an industrious man whom I observed there two or three days in succession, who had

set his heart on carrying a particular set of boxes upstairs. They had been left standing in a corner of the street, waiting, I fancy, to go off by the next mail, and their owner particularly wanted them to go anywhere but upstairs; but no matter; this exemplary man would hang about in the vicinity till he thought no one was looking, and then up would go one of the boxes on to his back, and away he would start aloft, though he knew perfectly well that he would be fetched back by the leg, with a torrent of abuse, before he got to the first landing. And he didn't belong to the hotel either; he was only a casual man in from the street, so I think he must have devised this either as a bit of fun, or a labour of love, or something of that sort.

Then there was another man, who spent all his time going up and down in the lift; he began at seven in the morning, and left off at ten at night; and he never oiled the machine once from beginning to end the whole time I was there. It was probably his peculiar form of penance. Or, maybe, it was work given him under some mistaken politically-economical idea, such as would be prevalent at a place like Buenos Ayres, that it was possible to make work. But nobody nor thing ever went up and down that lift, except the man himself. I only once asked if it ever took any passengers, and I was told that on that particular day it was out of order. It was certainly making more excruciating noises than usual, but otherwise it was going on much the same as ever.

I don't know whether I excited any surprise

by stopping at the hotel longer than most people, or if I was only put down as an eccentric milor, with rather peculiar ideas as to comfort; but anyhow, the waiters and everybody began to know me, and to seek to make my life easier by various small attentions, so that by the end of three or four days I felt quite at home.

The Vestrys were perhaps rather beneficial to me in this way. They had failed in their search for lodgings, so had decided to stop at the hotel as I did. The Le Trants had gone off almost immediately to some friends in the country. I was very glad to have some one to dine with, and Mrs. Vestry let me go and sit in her drawing-room, so that my evenings were often very comfortable, and I didn't feel so lonely as I might otherwise have done. Besides, I found Mr. Vestry a most influential person out at Buenos Ayres. It seemed that when living there formerly he had virtually founded the best part of the Republic, and he still retained his connection with most of the public works out there. He was manager of most of the railway companies, directed the drains, governed the gas, inspected the police, was honorary captain of the fire-brigade, controlled the post-office, superintended the telegraphs, looked after the trams—in fact, he was in that position that he could go to the Government and say, "Look here, if you don't do as I tell you, I'll just withdraw my patronage, and your miserable benighted country will all go to smash." And he was well known at the hotel, too. At first I had some occasional difficulties with some of the

waiters who had not acquired a sufficient idea of my importance as myself, but I soon found I only had to say "Vestry," and the scene was instantly changed; hosts of other waiters would crowd round me, eager to punish the offender, and to do my smallest or most unreasonable bidding.

The waiter who belonged to the passage I was situated in—they were all men-servants in the hotel; most of the women who go out there marry early, and become duchesses in their own right—attached himself particularly to me. It was very gratifying, but on the whole I had rather it had been some other waiter, as this one was, I think, not quite right in his head. I believe his real name was Hippolytus, or Julius Cæsar, or it may have been Æsculapius; it was certainly something classical, that is, if it wasn't Emily; but I used to call him James, for short. James was always stationed just outside my door, and my bell worked just outside too, on one of those electric arrangements that tumble down and show your number. Whenever I rang, I would hear James running down to the other end of the passage, and he would be out of sight before I could put my head out and stop him. After he had been down and found out from the porter what was the ordinary thing for a waiter to do when a bell rang, he would come up again; but by that time he would have forgotten which bell it was that had rung at all, and had to knock along all the doors in the passage till he came to mine at the very end. I had great trouble in instructing him as to what hot water was, and he always brought it in a different instru-

ment. I had it in a large pewter pot and a small china jug, in a big can and in a slop-pail, in a foot-tub, in a decanter, and lastly in a teapot. Then he had a kind of delicacy about making my bed, which had as a result that very often it would go without till late in the evening; but my sitting in the room offered no hindrance to his coming in and sweeping the floor till I couldn't remonstrate any more through coughing. He took my things to the wash; and, knowing the ways of foreign washerwomen, I explained to him most exhaustively how the turned-down collars were to be starched. He said he understood perfectly, and the shirts came back with the collars turned up like a Christy Minstrel's, and starched to the consistency of a guillotine. When I was troubled with mosquitoes, I asked him to put up a net, and he promised to do so. So he erected it all round the sides of the bed, and fastened it tightly at the corners, so that I could not get in myself, but he left the whole framework open at the top, so that the largest mosquito, even to the size of an elephant of reasonable dimensions, could, at any rate, have squeezed his way through.

But, perhaps, the greatest trouble James gave me was about the key of my room. The hotel regulations expressly stated that "the voyager shall lock his door, and take the key downstairs; and, if not, the hotel shall not in any way respond for any loss." I always locked my door at first, and always took the key down to the porter when I went to meals, but I found it of no use; James always carried it up again, and left it sticking

outside the door as a temptation for any weak person who might fall into it. Then I tried a reverse policy, and always left my key inside the door when I went out. James immediately began to be solicitous about the safety of my property, and when I used to come back, and after climbing up a slippery flight of stairs and along a considerable length of passages, at great risk to my game leg, get to my door, I would find it locked, and that I had to go all the way down again before I could get in. Then I used to sit down and anathematize James—because it was rather exasperating.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH I FINALLY COMMIT MYSELF.

THE Vestrys had now quite given up taking their meals in the public room, and when we could bring our hours to suit each other, I generally dined with them in their private room, and went afterwards with them to their sitting-room, where the evenings were mostly spent in the reception of cousins. Mrs. Vestry, who had married from Buenos Ayres, seemed to be related to half the aristocracy of the Republic, all Spanish, and all tested to sixteen-parrot-power in the way of talking. The hour chosen by Spaniards for calling is a very bad one; they come after dinner, so that they have to sit till they have talked themselves out, having nothing to take them away; and talking themselves out is a matter of no small time; in Mrs. Vestry's cousins' case it was quite unlimited. To begin with, they had to ask after all the other relations before they even opened on other topics; granting three minutes for each relation, that would occupy over an hour, simply; but added to this must be parentheses introduced whenever an unlucky shot happened to be made, and some one was inquired after who had lately died or married

or otherwise behaved or misbehaved herself or himself, and a full account had to be given of all the details before the regular course of inquiries could be resumed; all of which went to make up. Then very often, for fear they might be accused of hurrying away too soon, they generally turned on to a sort of appendix about me, and cross-questioned Mrs. Vestry as to who I was, and how old I was, and how I came there, and when I was going away again; which, as I just understood enough from their gesticulations, etc., to know what they were talking about, but was not sufficiently well up in the language to put in a word for myself, was very jolly for me. Usually about three sets of cousins to one evening finished Mrs. Vestry off, and she had to retire collapsed. She used to appeal to me for sympathy, and I offered to write out a history of all her side of the family tree for her to post up outside her door, so as to save her all the fatigue, but she said it wouldn't be in accordance with Buenos Ayres etiquette, and if some of her visitors got wind of my share in the proceeding they might look in on me, and leave a bullet or a knife somewhere inconveniently about me.

I made a good many acquaintances, however, among these cousins. Most especially amongst them was a Viscountess Somebody, who took a great interest in me, and who told me she was in the habit of coming over to London every season, and that I was to be sure to come and look her up. I should be most happy to do so, but unfortunately I have entirely forgotten her name.

If any one has come across a Viscountess Anybody who has been heard inquiring after a young Englishman of an intelligent, but somewhat robust, appearance, who was out on his travels some three years ago, I shall be glad if they will communicate with me, care of the publishers of this work. She had two little boys attached, who were very shortly on terms of the greatest intimacy with me. They regarded me, I think, as somewhat of a natural curiosity, and soon found me out in my private habitation in the hotel, where they invaded me frequently, and spent a great deal of my valuable time, when I ought to have been improving my time in learning Spanish or struggling with "Lothair," in asking me searching questions about myself, and inspecting all my travelling equipment, winding up my watch, and playing with my revolver and sword-stick, and otherwise conducting themselves in a manner that ought altogether to have infinitely delighted the heart of one who habitually loves children. Their manners were those of infants, but their talk was that of grown-up people; they were only aged eight and six respectively, and if they had been English children, I should have boxed their ears, and sent them out of the room in no time; but when a babe suddenly turns on you, and engages you in a discussion on South American politics, which is a subject about as intricate as one could hope to find, you can't help feeling there must be more in him than meets the eye, and sit up in cautious awe of what is coming next. But I believe these were only types of what all the children of the

South are; the heat forces them on beyond their years to an abnormal state of precocity; they marry at the age of sixteen or thereabouts, and are old men and women—especially the latter—at five-and-twenty, and then, if they don't actually die, they wither up and are no more heard of.

After I had been boxed up some days, I began rather to feel the want of fresh air and exercise, and as Archatt had been expatiating to me on the advantages of the trams, by whose means he told me one could go from anywhere to anywhere else, I thought the best way of combining a test of the truth of his statements with an inspection of the beauties of Buenos Ayres would be to go to the Plaza Victoria, where the cars started from, and get into the first one I came across, and so make the tour of the city. Archatt had particularly told me that I had only to stick to one tram and not be afraid, and, however far out of my way I might seem to be carried, if I only had faith, I should always eventually find myself back at the Plaza Victoria again.

The trams have entirely superseded every other form of locomotion in Buenos Ayres now; in fact, now they have been laid down there is very little room for any other form of vehicle in the streets at all, except where they can get up into a convenient hole at the side to let the cars pass; and from what I saw of what flys there were about the streets, I preferred even to walk to going in them. It was not that the conveyances themselves were particularly bad, but the roads over which they had to run were so frightful, more like

petrified mangold-wurzel fields than anything else I ever saw. The fly-proprietors have ingeniously tried to keep their commodities in the market as long as possible by constructing them so that their wheels just fit on to the rails of the tramways, so that they do get an occasional smooth run of a hundred yards or so, but then they always have to clear out directly a car comes along, which is about every two minutes, and that makes it even worse for the inmate of the fly, who no sooner has begun to acquire a little confidence, and think he can leave off holding on for dear life to the seat, than he suddenly finds himself committed to the rough stones again, and bumped about worse than ever.

The passage to the Plaza Victoria was attended with some danger, owing to the preposterous height of the side-walks, which in some places stand several feet above the level of the road-way, making it extremely difficult to get across the road at the corners of the squares. I should recommend any one who is more than ordinarily nervous to carry a small step-ladder about with him when he goes out for a walk in Buenos Ayres. I am not naturally a good climber; I have never been up anything higher than two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and now I was suffering under the additional disadvantage of weakness in the supports. Three times on the journey I had to walk the whole length of the street, after I had lowered myself down the precipice on one side, before I could find a convenient place to swarm up on the other, and meanwhile tram-cars

were whisking by at lightning speed, with horns blowing, and bells ringing, and whistles shrieking, as if the whole place was made for them, and grazing against me as I cowered as close as I could to the side of the road, till I really began to think I should be reduced to a regular jam. But fortune was good enough to favour me for that once, and I arrived at the Plaza at any rate in no very worse condition than I started.

I got into a car that seemed to be going to start soon, and after the usual ceremonies that take place when a foreign conveyance sets off on its voyage, tender adieux between the conductor and his family and the like, we left our moorings. There was no one in the car besides myself, and the driver and conductor looked at one another rather significantly, as if they were surprised at seeing me, but I didn't consider that it was any business of theirs, and I didn't think it very likely that they could have the audacity to murder or rob me in such a public place as a tram-car, which isn't the sort of vehicle that can be very conveniently driven off the main track into any side slum more suited for felonious purposes; so I sat calmly, and tried to take notes of what I saw as we passed along. It wasn't so easy to do that, however; it is true that the lines were better than the Rio ones in making the locomotion less bumpy, but they didn't make it less wavy; they were not laid level either lengthways or parallelways, so that the effect they produced on the car was a rolling sort of motion, like being in a small boat on a heavy swell just outside a harbour, and I began

to feel rather uncomfortable and not inclined to talk, even if there had been any one to talk to. The conductor came in once, and made some incoherent remarks, but I don't always approve of being hail-fellow-well-met with that class of people, so I merely gave him an assortment of the rags of the country that I had put into my pocket to defray current expenses, and retired again into my native dignity.

We proceeded in a zigzag sort of fashion, turning at the most unengineering-like right angles round the corners of the squares—Buenos Ayres is all built in square blocks, with the streets like the bars of a gridiron, so that by always keeping to the same number of turnings in the same direction one can never miss one's way home—and at last we got to a large open piece of ground, with a stable and row of sheds on one side and a cemetery on the other. Here the conductor signified that I had to get out, and as it proved that this was the head-quarters of the trams, and it was evident that my business could not be at the stables, he naturally supposed that I wanted to go to the cemetery, and politely showed me the way to the entrance. It appeared that though Archatt's theory of the cars always returning to the place from which they started was in the main correct, he had forgotten that there are periods when they go home to rest, and I had unfortunately selected one whose turn it was to do this. I signified my gratitude to the conductor for his undoubted desire to please, and, not wishing him to think I had made any mistake,

went straight into the cemetery, with as much as I could assume of an air of always having intended to come up there to choose a sepulchre for myself.

It was a very neat cemetery, with nicely laid-out walks and a few shrubs that were doing their very best to make the place look cheerful, and one old gravedigger, who was lying asleep on his back, waiting for something to do; and I sat down for a little, and meditated partly on the vanity of human wishes, and partly on how I should get back again, and then, when I thought the conductor wasn't looking, I escaped out of the gate and across the open and along the last street up which we had come, and got into another tram-car that was passing by, and which, I took care to see, had the horses harnessed on the far side from the cemetery. I went for some distance through the suburbs in that car in company with an old negro woman—or she may have been of some other nationality, and hadn't washed for some time—with a bandana handkerchief round her head and a basket of bananas, and then the tramway gave a wriggle round the corner, and lo! there we were, coming back to the cemetery by another route!

I got out again and found my first conductor waiting to greet him of my second journey, so I had to pretend I had left something in the cemetery—because, if there is one thing I hate, it is having those sort of people making remarks about me—and had come back to fetch it, and then I set forth again. I don't wish to be tedious, so I

will content myself by saying that I subsequently tried five cars in succession, and I always found myself back at that cemetery, till at last I really began to think I should have to take up my quarters there permanently. I had been unlucky enough to have chosen the hour for my expedition at which all the cars went home to tea. But at last I watched till I saw one of the seven I had come up there in setting out again, and then I felt sure that it couldn't have the shamelessness to return immediately, so I got in, still keeping up the appearance of having been up there intentionally all the time, and of having at last finished what I wanted to do, and this time I really did arrive safe at the Plaza Victoria, and went home, wearied with my exertions.

But meanwhile that all these little events in my life—life is made up of little events, as I believe has not unfrequently been remarked before, and if it hadn't been for little events I shouldn't have been able to concoct this book at all—were taking place, although I had been taking as much care of myself as, if indeed not more than could be reasonably expected of one who has only himself to look after him and tie him down to his medical adviser's orders, yet my leg would not make any further progress towards recovery. I had, when I first arrived, placed great hopes in the general salubrity of the place, as testified to by its very name, to recover me in a very short time, the more especially as the ship's doctor had constantly assured me that it was only the saltness of the atmosphere at sea that prevented me from

getting on there ; but now I found that the "fine air" of Buenos Ayres is only like the "fine air" at a great many health-resorts, only beneficial to certain complaints, and, of course, as I might only have supposed, from the usual turn that things had taken with me at that time, injured legs were not included in the list. I began to grow desperate, and resolved to hazard everything on one last cast, i.e. I determined to go and get a final verdict from the doctor, and decide as to my next move accordingly.

I worked round to his house in course of time by means of trams, sticking to one as long as it headed in the right direction, and as soon as it began to edge away from it, leaving it for another, and I interviewed him. It was only as I more than half anticipated; he shook his head and placed the period of my complete restoration at a more remote distance than ever. Then I told him plainly that it was no use his calculating upon making a job out of me; that I only had credit to live upon there, and even that couldn't go on for ever; so that, unless he wished to afford me his services gratis, he must do something decisive for me soon, or say good-bye. He realized the situation at once, and recommended me to get Mr. Vestry to give me an order for the English Hospital. Then I returned by a similar route to that by which I had come, and sat down to think.

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The *Tagus* was to sail that afternoon, and the captain and doctor had been in to bid me good-bye the night before.

* * * * *

I hadn't paid my hotel-bill, and I had already commenced a series of outstanding little accounts with chemists and other people, and, besides that, I was deeply in debt with the bank manager for the money he had advanced me for immediate expenses, but I forgot all about that. I knew the tender left the Mole at half-past three, and it was now ten minutes past by my watch.

* * * * *

I put on my hat, caught up my stick, and got downstairs as fast as I could, and flew—it is astonishing what a pace you can get out of a lame leg when you are pressed—to the Mole, in hopes of catching the captain and entreating him to put off the ship's departure a couple of hours or so, till I could get my things together and come off to him in a boat. I was thoroughly heart-sick; I have always been fond of home, but I never have been babyish about it; but now my one and only craving was to get away from all this worry and disappointment, and get back to my own belongings, even if it were only to go to bed and never get up again.

* * * * *

There was a little crowd of peons standing on the end of the mole, laughing and talking and smoking in their various languages. I rushed up to them, and said, "Poco steamboat," "Bateau à vapeur pour le *Tagus;* donde estar?" or something to the same effect. One of the more intelligent ones caught my meaning, and pointed away down the river. I followed the direction of his

arm with my eye, and there, just disappearing over the edge, was a little black spot with a cloud of smoke hanging back towards us on the calm air. Then I knew that I was too late, and I sat down on a capstan, and I said, "It is Kismet," and I lighted my pipe, and reconciled myself to the Inevitable.

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Mr. Vestry made no difficulty in recommending me as a private patient for the hospital, and Archatt seconded me, and all my other friends whose names I didn't know added the said names to my entry paper, till I began to feel more as if I was being put up for a fashionable club than about to be chained by the leg for an indefinite time in a place of confinement. And next day Archatt came round with a fly that he had procured for me, and told me all was ready; I began to understand now what the sensation must be like of being summoned from one's cell in Newgate for the last time. My things were packed, and I settled with the hotel-keeper, thereby draining my borrowed resources to the last drop. Archatt banged the door of the fly behind me, and wished me a pleasant time, for which sentiment I could have kicked him then and there if I had been capable of it, though a sense of decency prevented me from doing anything further than tell him how grateful I was to him for all his kindness, and we were off.

My driver seemed to have been educated on a fire-engine from the manner in which he drove, and by the time we had turned the seventeenth

corner I had got so mixed up with my luggage that I couldn't tell which was myself and which was which of my portmanteaus, but we got on somehow to a place where the houses began to stand in their own gardens on the outskirts of the town, and finally drew up at the entrance to what ought to have been a drive, but which was at that moment being dug up by a man in a flannel shirt and a pair of duck trousers, seemingly with the object of converting it into a potato-field.

The driver did not appear willing to risk his springs over this new kind of roughness, so I had to get out and walk up to the house, which stood back about twenty yards from the entrance, the driver following with as much as he could manage of my luggage at a time. No one about. I looked into a room that was fitted up like a kitchen, and coughed, but it produced no effect. Then I went on and looked into another room that had arrangements about it like a laundry, and coughed again—louder this time, but still no one came. At last I came to a bell, and rang, and was immediately sorry I had done so, as the noise it made was almost sufficient to bring the whole structure about my ears. Then the individual who had been digging up the drive, and had hitherto taken no notice of me, I suppose considering that he had not been officially informed of my arrival, went in at another door, and presently appeared at that where I was standing, and demanded my business. It seems to be the rule in South America, that when a man doubles a part, as he so often has to do, he always

makes a point of keeping up the appearance of being the other person till absolutely necessary.

I gave him my card and my credentials, and he took them inside. I sat down and waited on a bench outside the door, and after a time the doctor came out to interview me. Everything appeared satisfactory, and he ordered my things to be carried upstairs. Then he sent for a nurse, and there I was,—fixed.

CHAPTER XX.

CLINIC PHILOSOPHY.

THE doctor looked an agreeable man enough, but I detected the usual ravenous expression in his eyes as I stated my case, and he looked at me to satisfy himself that I was as bad as he should like me to be. Then he summoned an ancient but friendly-looking nurse and told her to get a bed for me. When I had gone upstairs and got in there, she came again and took my garments away. Then the doctor came again and asked me if Mr. Vestry would be my security. I dared say he would, but under the circumstances I told the doctor I didn't exactly see how I was to escape even if I wanted to; all of which he noted down in a book as if it was my last dying statement, which I didn't like. After that he sent two linseed poultices, and two stalwart men to put things under the hind legs of my bed till my feet were considerably above the level of my head. This was the first treatment.

When I next saw the doctor I asked him how long he thought it would take to mend me. He said about three weeks. I had meant to put a good face on the matter, but I had not made my

calculations for this sort of thing, so I merely said, "Thank you, that is enough for the present," because I saw he was going to gloat over my dilapidation; and when he left, which he very delicately did almost at once, I turned over and groaned.

The ward I was in was really a public one, only it was screened off temporarily from the next to accommodate me, as the hospital happened to be doing well that week in the financial way, and there was quite a little run on the paying section. There were four beds in this ward, each with its locker by its side and its number over its head. My number was 9, and underneath it was hung a placard, just as though I was a beast in the Zoological Gardens, with my name, species, age, and occupation, "travelling for pleasure." When the nurse brought this in and I read it, I groaned again—inwardly, this time, however—it all came home to me so.

Conscience began: "John, this is a funny predicament you've got yourself into." I was naturally a little irritated, and replied, "I don't know what you call funny, Conscience, but I can't see anything funny in it at all." And I turned over rather sulkily, and groaned again.

I think I must have gone on groaning off and on in this way for something over two hours, but then I came to the conclusion that it didn't seem to make me very much happier, so I left off to try something else.

I reasoned I might as well have stopped at home as be travelling for pleasure in this kind of

way. Then Conscience tried again: "Look here, it's very lucky this happened when it did. You're out here, at any rate, and you'll be all right again in another three weeks or so. Now if it had been at home you would never have started at all."

There was something in that, so I determined to make the best of it and turned philosopher. The true aim of philosophy, I believe, or at any rate one of the true aims, is to discover the great end of life. This, of course, varies with most people according to circumstances. Now with me at this particular period it seemed to be to get through time as quickly as possible.

I didn't do much the first day, as I was arranging my thoughts in preparation for beginning on the next. I wanted some basis to start from, and couldn't fix on one to suit me. I tried philosophizing my rooms and its furniture, and endeavouring to persuade myself how happy I was to have got into a place where everything was arranged in a manner so perfectly conducive to health. I was sure of that with regard to my bed, as it was so excruciatingly hard, quite the sort of thing one reads of in treatises on Healthy Living and Healthy Dying. I subsequently found that the place where the spring-mattress—at the worst the sacking—would have been in any rational bed, was ingeniously supplied by a window-shutter.

I tried to philosophize the dog and cat attached to the hospital, who very thoughtfully and kindly came in to sympathize with me about dinner-time. Unfortunately there didn't seem to be any kindred spirit between them, and their ideas wouldn't

blend, so that it only resulted in a dispute over a chop-bone, and their being driven out by the house-steward to settle it round the corner.

It was a fine day, and I had the two great folding-doors on to the balcony open, so as to see any of my friends when they came in shoals, as they had promised, to visit me in my affliction. I lay waiting to welcome them, but they didn't arrive. I tried to think of some poetry appropriate to the occasion, but it had all slipped my memory. Then I regretted having wasted my time so while I had such great opportunities, and resolved on my recovery to begin an entire reformation. And while I was putting my ideas into order again to consider exactly how to set about it, I fell into a state of oblivion.

I felt considerably more lively next morning, when I woke at seven, the regulation hour of the establishment, and after drinking some tea allowed me by the rules, and completing the scanty amount of toilet that my surroundings both required and allowed, I started on my good intentions punctually at eight. My scheme consisted in taking my life as a whole, and sketching out an autobiography, dividing it into volumes, books, chapters, sections, and paragraphs, according to the time they were supposed to represent, until I had finally arrived at the strict apportionment of every hour to some particular purpose that was to benefit humanity; and a little after breakfast-time I had just finished up a very satisfactory career, and was proceeding to think about the necessary arrangements for my funeral, and what

I should have put about me on my monument, when Mr. and Mrs. Le Trant, who had heard of my misfortunes, came in to see me. By the time they had to go I had begun to feel almost jolly again. Conscience said, "You see, my dear John, you are not forsaken by the world; on the contrary, you will probably see many more people than you would have done in an ordinary way; certainly more than if you had had to go and call on them." And I'm not sure Conscience didn't rather have me there.

And so I passed the time in philosophizing, reading, and receiving visitors, though, no doubt sadly to the detriment of humanity, the two latter occupations were more agreeable to me than the first. The Le Trants supplied me with a good lot of books of the Waverley and George Eliot types, and I set to work, and by the time I had finished them I had got into capital training, and would have backed myself to read against anyone else of my own size and weight for any given time. I don't promise to have remembered much about the details, but when a man goes in for a match with sculls, who on earth expects him to know much about the scenery?

I had plenty of visitors, too, at first—extraneous ones, young ladies of all ages and shades of beauty, who came in with little books and baskets and conversed with me very pleasantly, till at last I began to feel rather self-conceited, and flatter myself that I had become one of the fashionable resorts of Buenos Ayres. But when they discovered somehow that I was a private patient

strayed into a public ward by mistake, they dropped me as if I had been a hot potato, though why it should be more interesting to go and read to a lot of great Irish sailors who couldn't understand half they were talking about, than it was to me, I must say I to this day fail to see.

Then my old friends of the voyage came to see me, and brought me flowers enough to stock a ball-room, or at any rate to give the doctor a new button-hole every time he came to see me, which soon began to be pretty often, he being rather solitary in his situation, and glad to have someone to come in and chat with, and fruit sufficient to upset my system every day for a month. I devoted some of the intervals of my time to the composition of a new drink out of some of the varieties of these fruits, which will no doubt go down amongst other items of my memory to my posterity. Its great peculiarity was that being concocted of so many nice things, they all counteracted each other; it wanted an acquired taste, but I daresay one could bring oneself to like it in time.

Many of my friends, residents in Buenos Ayres, were *ex officio* governors of the hospital, and their great anxiety seemed to be for me to have something to complain of. I wished to please them, but couldn't think of any way of doing it, till at last one night the Santa Rosa, a kind of gale peculiar to those parts, sprang up, and some of the deficiencies in the hospital came into play in the shape of a magnificent system of draughts, which entailed my extending myself spread-eagle fashion and holding on tight to the sides of the

bedstead to save being blown out of it myself, and when all was over, getting up in secret defiance of the doctor's orders to recover my bed-clothes from the four quarters of the room. I considered this worth mentioning, but the odd thing was that the other people didn't; they seemed to think it a good thing the ward was so well ventilated; so as that was their notion of a comfort, I gave up racking my brains to find out comparative discomforts as a bad job.

The regularity of meals helped in a great measure to pass the time. At first I rather resented having them brought exactly to the minute, as it savoured a little of prison discipline. But I soon philosophized that. I had become part of an institution, and if I didn't support it, I and the institution and everything else would all go to smash; and I succeeded so well in my self-persuasion that I began even to resent the other way.

We had meals thus: at seven a cup of tea, at eleven breakfast. There were three courses to breakfast, as to Mr. Gladstone's policy; the last was invariably a mutton-chop or a beef-steak alternately, but to the first two it was not always so easy to put a name. They came in great regularity, however, till, towards the end of my sojourn, I had almost thought of perfecting my new system by altering the names of my days as they did in the French Revolution, and instead of talking in the ordinary hum-drum way about Monday, Tuesday, &c., saying, "Thing-that looks-like-a-mince-pie-but-tastes-like-calves'-head-day," or

"portion-of-a-bird-that-seems-to-be-a-cross-between-a-water-wagtail-and-a-guineapig-day," and so on. At three there was more tea, and at half-past five dinner, conducted on the same principle as breakfast, and at seven again there was more tea, and then the day, so far as feeding was concerned, was over, and we could go to bed, if it could strictly be called going to bed when we were there already, as soon as we chose.

I kept my philosophizing now more for the evening. I generally jotted down in the day anything I thought wanted it, so as not to interfere with any of the other occupations I had devised, and then after dark, when I had settled into a sleeping position, I tried how it could be reconciled to the Great Order of Things. I succeeded with most things by reflecting that they hadn't happened otherwise, but there were two that I couldn't persuade myself were necessary to existence. One was a man on the other side of the screen with a snore. I could stand coughs and sneezes as part of the proper *régime* in a hospital, and I could even go so far as to tolerate a decent kind of snore, but this particular snore was not of a decent kind; it was past all philosophy; it was one of those things in heaven and earth that Horatio never could have dreamed of, even if he had feasted off lobster and pork-pie, and gone to bed straight on the top of them to try. It was not a good manly snore that recalls old school-days and tells its audience that it is going to keep on, and that they must either remedy it with a boot or else resign themselves to it till its constant repetition

lulls them to sleep, but a nasty, sneaky little sort of thing, coming at irregular intervals, like a party of volunteers trying to fire a volley; sometimes stopping long enough to delude the person with the hypothetical boot-jack into the belief that the instrument would not be needed; and then, just as he would have thrown it down out of his reach and turned to go to sleep, the snore would come again.

I must confess my philosophy was a good deal harassed by this, and then there was the other thing, which very nearly finished it altogether. There came two hot nights, and with them came insects—insects of every kind: mosquitoes so large that I had serious thoughts of practising on them with my revolver, only the doctor objected; horrible creatures with trillions of legs, which crawled up my bedposts; beetles of elephantine dimensions, which crawled into my candle. I waged war on all these, and slew multitudes of them with "Lothair," which I found most serviceable as a weapon of defence; and then on turning for refreshment to my lemonade, I found that occupied by a squadron of ants. Several had already perished, it is true, but I had not intended my lemonade as an ant-trap, though I may get some credit for the discovery. I gave up trying to fight them in the end; in fact, I was afraid of meeting with more startling revelations every time I searched in a fresh place, so beat a retreat under the bed-clothes, where I remained till my persecutors had forgotten me.

After some time of the upside-down treatment

I was shifted into a new and really private ward, and the doctor, who had evidently been studying his medical books with a view to seeing what purpose he could turn me to, announced that the time was come to make a second grand scientific experiment on me; one he had often heard of, but which he had never yet had an opportunity of seeing done; he was going to graft me. I felt a little nervous, my notions of grafting being that you cut one thing—which in this case I supposed would be me—in a slantindicular direction, and then tied it on to another thing in a tight and very unornamental manner with odd pieces of various-coloured worsted, and left it to take its chance of flourishing or dying. When I had done anything of this kind in our garden in the country at home, I usually had found it did the latter. Nevertheless I heroically consented to sacrifice myself to the cause of science, and only stipulated that the experiment should be performed privately, and not in a theatre, or any place of that sort. I once went with a medical friend of mine to see an operation at one of the London hospitals, purely for the sake of improving my mind, of course, and I remember thinking that if I had been the man, I should have demanded compensation when I came to, for being made a public fool of.

Without entering into harrowing details, I was grafted before breakfast on the morning after my move. There were present, besides the doctor, two nurses, one Welsh and one Scotch, an Irish butler, and a half-breed errand-boy. The services of these were called in, not to witness the act and

deed, nor to restrain my struggles, but that they might each contribute something towards my well-being. My part of the performance was not so uncomfortable, but the other people didn't seem to enjoy it so much. However, we were all pretty cheerful, and after it was all over, and I had had portions of all the different stocks of the British nation—for the doctor lent me some—introduced into my constitution, I was swathed up in several miles of linen till I felt like an Italian *bambino*, and a new era of my cure set in.

CHAPTER XXI.

PROGRESSING FAVOURABLY.

I AM sorry to say that after the first nine days, in strict accordance with the old theory, my friends did not come to see me quite so often. Their conduct was rather similar to that of a good many people, who take up a stranger till they think he has got a good start in the world, and then kick him out to shift for himself; only in my case they might rather be said to have kicked me in. But I can quite excuse them, as I haven't the slightest doubt, now I am in a position to think calmly over it, that if I had been well and able to go about on business or pleasure, as the case might be, however much I might have been present with him in spirit, my evilly-disposed body would have been too frequently absent from a poor suffering creature in hospital; and more especially if the weather had been as gloriously and tantalizingly fine as it was during those first three weeks of my incarceration. Mr. Farphar was the only person who came to see me for a whole ten days together. I was deeply touched; and here let me record my most sincere apologies for the manner in which I behaved to him on board. The only consolation

I can afford myself in my remorse is, that if I was too much inclined to be satirical in my treatment of him, he didn't perceive it. Now he came and brought me a whole lot of books to while away the weary hour. They were certainly of the deeper kind, treating of Decimal Coinage and Schemes to pay off the National Debt, and the lightest of them was Carlyle's "French Revolution;" but I had brought all that upon myself by setting up in a false light in my dealings with him; and I did them through, and had the satisfaction of knowing that my mind ought to have been a good deal improved by them. And I slept much better during that second fortnight.

But one can always have too much of anything, however good it is, and I began after a time to get a little tired of myself, and for want of better company I had to turn to those of my fellow-creatures about the hospital itself; not so much on those in a like predicament with myself, for of course being more or less confined to my room, and afterwards, when allowed out to take some air, to a chair on the balcony, I hadn't much opportunity of studying the other patients, except from a distance; otherwise I daresay I might have found a good deal of character among them, as they say illness always brings out any one's individuality more than anything else. There were two other "privates," as the nurses and rest of the staff called them, I suppose with an idea of making a distinction from the "generals," who, as far as I could see, were subject to exactly the same regulations as we were, only without the

privilege of paying for them. One of these two had been in there about two years, with a hole in him that he had caught from a bull in the Camp, and the doctor told me there was every chance of his remaining an indefinite time lónger; but as one of the chief reasons for this lengthened stay was that he had no money to pay with, I should have thought it would have been the better economy to have let him go. He used to stop and gaze at me as he passed my ward on his way from the balcony, but as he never spoke to me I never spoke to him. I never could think of anything to say soon enough before he went on. Besides, I have rather strict notions of etiquette, and as he had been longest there, of course he ought to have spoken first. The other might just as well have been a nonentity, as he never got out of bed from first to last. He eventually gave himself up as a bad job, and had himself put into a crate labelled "with care," and sent back to England.

There was one of the "generals" who was rather desirous of cultivating my acquaintance, and I should have been glad to have met the advances made to me, but for two circumstances which rather outbalanced my craving for society; one was that she was of the female persuasion, and as such oughtn't to have intruded on me without a proper introduction; and the other was that she was mad. She was quite harmless, and was let roam and sing at her own sweet will, like Ophelia—only she didn't wear white muslin, and straw or other vegetables in her hair, and was sixty if

she was a day—about the passages, and she made several attempts to come into my room to improve our acquaintance, but was invariably caught in the act by some of the staff and removed, protesting violently.

So as I couldn't go round to see others, I had to confine my society again still more particularly to those who could come to see me. First there was the doctor. I made tremendous friends with him; he was a young man, and wildly athletic, and as I wasn't, we naturally hit it off wonderfully together, as I had no particular fibs about my own prowess with which to overcap his. He would come in and chat with me a great deal in the evenings. He struck me as not being at all the right man in the right place; of course I don't mean to impugn his reputation as a medical man, as I am sure he knew quite as much about his business as could be expected of any of his profession; but he was a man eminently fitted for society, and this was about the last place where he was likely to get it. We did a good deal in the mutually sympathizing line together, and that helped towards drawing our friendship closer.

I suppose with a view to making the hospital as much like the real thing as possible, there was a body of one medical student attached to it, who used to walk it and wish all the patients good-morning every day, and to whom the doctor, I believe, in his more leisure moments, that is, when not engaged in his work or gossiping with me, used to deliver lectures on the science of medicine. The doctor kept a very sharp eye on

him, however, and never allowed him to play any of his practical jokes on me, and I don't think on any of the "generals" either. He was the happy possessor of an articulated skeleton, which hung up in the doctor's private room, but I fancy he never did very much with it but manipulate it like a jumping-jack, and get it into utterly impossible positions, quite contrary to all the rules of nature, and entailing the unscrewing of the whole apparatus, which, though no doubt a highly convenient mode of proceeding if it could be adopted in the case of any one getting out of repair, would unfortunately be quite impracticable in everyday life. He lived with his family somewhere in the town, but was eventually, possibly about the end of the century, when he had done his course, going into the camp to start a practice there. He told me there was a splendid opening for a young man there, there were such a lot of accidents. There is always such a variety of ways of looking at things.

The more menial part of the establishment afforded endless opportunities for the study of character. No one ever engages a servant except by the week at Buenos Ayres, and the general rule seems to be to have them on trial, and give them notice directly they come. I was under the hands of no less than four head-nurses during my time, all of whom either didn't suit the doctor, or, considering the state things have got into out there, more likely found he didn't suit them, and they can hardly have had time to unpack before they moved on somewhere else. All of them had, more or less, their own ideas of nursing, and

disputed the doctor's right to meddle with their business.

My first nurse was a Welshwoman, a motherly old body, and barring the fact that her one idea of looking after a patient was to give him everything he wanted, reasonable or unreasonable, even if in the latter case she had to smuggle it up under her apron, I should have flourished under her care. She took a fancy to me from the first, because she instantly recognized in me a likeness to a scapegrace son who had been in the habit of getting extremely intoxicated, as far as I could gather from what she told me, and had finally abstracted her little savings out of the teapot where she kept them, and gone to sea. But so strong is maternal affection, that I had the greatest difficulty in preventing her from taking me in her arms under the impression she had found her prodigal at last, declaring I was the very image, both in form and habit, of what he had been when last seen, some twenty years before. She had been out there ever since, and seemed to have had her ideas as to the size of England very much contracted, her chief notion being that everybody there knew everybody else, and had I not luckily hit on the expedient of telling her that, to the best of my belief, all the people whom she inquired after—especially a Mr. Jones, of Wales, about whom she was particularly solicitous—she would have been doubly disappointed in me. She left chiefly because of her tender heart.

Then I was put into the charge of a

Scotchwoman, but I didn't find her half so accommodating. She always gave the idea of being too supercilious in her treatment of me to make me like her very much. She was perhaps a very good instance of the general money-making spirit in that country, for, though her husband was literally coining money up in the camp, she had thought it worth while to leave him and see what she could do for herself in the town. I always felt she looked on me purely as a means of turning an honest penny, and didn't take the slightest interest in me as an individual, which latter sentiment I largely reciprocated. She heard of a better place, and as a matter of course went to look after it.

After her I had two Irish nurses, very well intentioned, no doubt, and very anxious to learn, but those being hardly sufficient qualifications for a head-nurse, and, moreover, their way of learning being evidently to teach themselves by experience, resenting any help on the part of the doctor, they had to quit too. For the last part of my cure therefore—I am slightly anticipating such thread as my narrative can be said to have at all, with the object of finishing the subject immediately on hand before proceeding to others—I was in Bridget's care. Bridget was the most assiduous and untiring of domestics: if by any chance I may hereby make a return for all she did for me, let this chronicle of her goodness serve as such. She was no more than a help, one of the rawest specimens of the Irish hired girl, but she was most untiring and active in her services, and, best

of all, never in the way when not wanted. She survived the whole series of head-nurses, to whom she acted as lieutenant, holding bandages, running for things the others had usually forgotten, and otherwise making herself generally useful in doing little odd jobs. The great secret of her success was that she had no faith in herself. When I had acquired the art of swaddling myself up, as I did later on in my residence, I offered to give her lessons, in order to show my gratitude by promoting her advancement, but she steadily refused on the plea that she knew she could never learn to herring-bone, as her fingers were all thumbs. I am not ashamed of owning that I not unfrequently indulged in duets on Irish airs with Bridget while she was scrubbing my floor: I did a great many rather odd things at that period to relieve the monotony. But let no one think that I entertained any romantic affection for her, as is so often the case with heroes when they find themselves in similar plights to mine. There was no fear of that: she was by no means beautiful: her face was in shape like a fiddle-case, and she had absolutely no features at all: that is, they were so deep-set into her countenance, that you couldn't see them when she stood side-face, and looking at her full-face the only one of them that could be discerned clearly was her mouth: that was indeed a very cavern, and when she smiled most of the rest of her disappeared into it. As for her figure, I am sure she had been brought up from her earliest infancy quite guiltless of corsets, swan-bill or otherwise: the only thing I have ever once

seen like it, was a sack of oats leaning up against the corner of a stable. I reverenced her for her warm heart, but my admiration for her was conducted on the strictest platonic principles.

The males, to borrow an expression from Mr. Kinglake when treating of similar matters, were four in number: the steward, the butler, the watchman, and Peter: they were afterwards diminished to three by the departure of the steward, who drew a prize in a lottery, or became a member of the Government, or did some one other of the fifty unexpected things that are always occurring in that exceedingly oddly conducted country: anyhow, he came in for some sort of stroke of fortune or other, and retired to thrive upon it. I never really made out why he was called steward at all, unless it was by analogy from life on a steam-boat; for my idea of a steward on land had always thitherto been of a swell put in sole charge of things, and taking all the trouble, while his employer enjoyed all the profits: but this man had no responsibilities, and was more of a general servant than anything, who did anything and everything, from bringing the patients their meals to white-washing the outside of the hospital when the hot weather set in; besides looking after the doctor's crop of early potatoes. He was a burly Yorkshireman, very stolid, and I never could get very much out of him, except that I discovered that the dignity of his title did not prevent him accepting a small tribute that I paid to his merits. But to tell truth, I can't say that I ever yet met the man

who rejected my humble offerings with the scorn that I have sometimes rather hopefully anticipated, not even a College Porter.

The watchman was one of the seventy-five per cent. of the English population in the country, an Irishman. He was singularly voluble, even considering his nationality, and sometimes when he came on his rounds to see my candle was out, by order of the doctor—an order which, by the way, he and I came to an understanding about, and honoured as frequently in the breach as in the observance—he used to stay talking so long that I began to be afraid he was going to presume upon my willingness to listen to him for a reasonable time, and avail himself of me to ease the solitariness of having to sit up all night. His duties necessitated his keeping peculiar hours: he rose at five in the afternoon and had his breakfast; then he would go into the town and carry my letters, which I have reason to believe he mostly either understamped or else forgot altogether, as since my return I have been unable to account for half of those I despatched at that period, and I know I wrote volumes,—or to buy me little extra comforts, such as sweet soap, or additions to my private stock of candles, or, when I had so far advanced in my recovery as to be allowed to smoke, tobacco. Then he would begin his rounds, which lasted till about eleven, and he became particularly vigorous when he knew he would meet the doctor on the prowl to see all was right, and after that he retired to some place, I suppose within call in case of any emergency, but such a

thing never occurred the whole of my time there. Everybody slept so soundly, that he would have been perfectly justified if he really did so as well—except at four in the morning, when he had to prepare his dinner. But wherever he went to, he always managed to be about again, actively engaged in his duties, when the doctor was up and dressed, and he went to bed again about half-past seven in the morning. He was perhaps rather intended for ornament than anything else, as it would hardly have been correct for everybody to be asleep at once in a hospital, and he was paid to keep up the character of the place.

I first made friends with him over the linseed poultices which he had to put on for me during the first few nights when I was undergoing that system of treatment. My first impressions connected with him were chiefly of a big stick and a dark lantern, with which he scared me on the first night of my arrival, suddenly entering as he did about eleven o'clock, and inquiring if I was the gentleman for the cough-mixture. I said I believed not, so after trying to palm off a rub on me, he finally decided that these remedies must be meant for someone else, and that I must be destined for the linseed poultices. Fortunately for my progress, the next administration fell due somewhere about the time he had to stir the kitchen fire, or I might not have got it, and then the next coming after the other attendants were again stirring, he had no further responsibility in me. But afterwards, when he had nothing further to do with me medicinally, he would come in and

yarn away to me by the yard. He was another of those autobiographically inclined sort of people. He had seen a lot of life. He had left home at the early age of six, forgetting to say good-bye to his relations, and had been working his way round the world ever since. He had been to the Cape in a collier; then on to Australia, where he had pursued the vocation of clown in a circus; and then proceeded on to Peru, where he had had a turn at the gold-mines, frequently having money in his pocket to the extent of a thousand pounds; but, as he expressed it himself, he had somehow never managed to keep any of it there, and here he was, night-watchman in a hospital, only waiting till he might feel disposed to work his way on through Brazil up to the States, and so perhaps make his way home; but even then he said he very much doubted if he could settle down there, as probably all his belongings were dead, and he would very likely start off on another tour. He quite infected me with a desire to follow his example: I believe it is a characteristic of most people who find themselves unavoidably confined to one position, to be especially restless and anxious to be everlastingly moving on; and I was no exception. I even very nearly went so far as to enter into an agreement with him to start off on an expedition to an indefinite somewhere as soon as I got on my legs again, but I had plenty of time to think over it, and concluded that it would be unwise—luckily, or I don't know where I mightn't have been now, even supposing I were anywhere at all.

The butler was another specimen of the generally useful type of domestic, dignified for appearance sake with an imposing title. He was a little dark man with long shaggy hair, and very white teeth, rather like a Shetland pony. I was a very long time making out his nationality; he was not brought into immediate contact with me at first, until the steward had left, and he was told off to supply that functionary's place in addition to his own duties, and I was much mystified as to what sort of hybrid he could be, as I could see him through my windows helping the steward at his white-washing, and chaffing any of the *peons* who came into the courtyard, each in his own peculiar language. When he came to look after me, he preserved a rigid silence for the first two or three days, only bringing me in my meals and putting them down with signs for me to partake of the refreshment provided for me; something in the style of the three stock black servants in the Eastern tales, where the hero finds their tongues have been cut out, for no particular reason except that their owner wants to be fashionable. I very likely should never have exchanged a word with him from first to last, and have remained ignorant of his nationality, but that having been for some time exercised by the way in which when he changed my plate, he did not provide me with a fresh knife and fork, but merely produced a napkin out of his breast-pocket and wiped them over—a proceeding which I might perhaps tolerate in a foreign hotel, but which I thought was coming it rather a little too strong in a British hospital, and under the very

shelter of the British flag, I at last screwed up my courage to the desired pitch and resolved to fire off a hot remonstrance I had prepared in Spanish with the aid of my dictionary and grammar. I chose Spanish from among the many languages I might have tried on him from my *répertoire*, first, because I thought if I was going to plunge into the intricacies of foreign tongues at all, I might as well go well in head over ears as just paddle about in the shallows of German or French; and, secondly, because most likely if he was anything, he was Spanish, though why I should have jumped at that conclusion I don't exactly know, now I come to think of it, seeing that in this Spanish land the Spaniards seemed to me to be in a decided minority, or, at any rate, mostly asleep and never findable anywhere; and if he only spoke a *patois* of his native tongue, I might possibly in my efforts after the ideal, hit on some lower standard that might appeal to his understanding. How far my success in the attempt at Spanishing, as the Portuguese vocabularist has it, went, I never ascertained, but the immediate result of his finding that I had got a voice, of which he perhaps, whilst I was hesitating how to address him, had not been aware before, was that he answered me in the purest Irish brogue one could wish for in or out of the Sainted Isle: it proved that he was a native of Cork, like most of the rest of them, and his foreign characteristics were only the results of acclimatization. I am going to write an essay some day on "The Irishman as an Exotic,"

showing how it is only consistent with the bare fact of his being an Irishman that the only place where he cannot flourish is in Ireland.

I did not care for the butler very much, as he did not do much to entertain me. He used to bring me my meals very regularly, and as regularly inquired after my health every morning, which used to bore me excessively, as it always does invalids after a time, but beyond that did not seem to think that anything more was required of him. He was the only one of all those with whom I had to deal to whom I took any real dislike; not that I had any particular reason for it, but we made a wrong start, and never managed to get back again into the right track of mutual friendship.

Peter was a half-breed errand boy, who also sort of corresponded to Bridget among the females, and was general flunkey to everybody else when required, always being supposed ready and capable to undertake everybody else's work when they didn't feel disposed to do it themselves. He was the son of the insane patient, and had originally been admitted into the hospital under the supposition that the demented state of his origin must necessitate his wanting some looking after as well. After two or three years of probation, however, when he had not evinced any symptoms of a glaringly lunatic nature, he had been kept on as a sort of charity, and promoted to the position of an universal assistant; and as he was the only member of the establishment who had been there for any length of time, and

so the only one who could be expected to be acquainted with the traditions of the place, his services could not probably have been very well dispensed with. I daresay if occasion had really required he could have stepped temporarily into the doctor's place, and saved the hospital from a collapse. He was only twelve or thirteen at that time, but he was endowed with a sagacity beyond his years, and I shouldn't wonder if one day we were to see him figuring in the papers after some of the periodical revolutions out there as President Peter, or at any rate as having been shot in the attempt. He was an uncouth creature when I first knew him, but seeing great things in him, I took him in hand, and I am happy to say that he had considerably improved in his personal appearance when I left. There was so much to do with him that I had to take him in sections. I began with his head: I should say that he had never brushed his hair, letting having it cut quite out of the question, probably having thitherto considered it more economical to use it as a natural thatch, and so save the expense of any other head-gear. I gave him some bank-notes, and persuaded him to go and have as much removed as the barber would for the money; but either I miscalculated the value of the rags I gave him, or else hair-cutting is cheap in Buenos Ayres, for he returned as bald as a coot, thereby seriously alarming the doctor, who, had I not explained the facts of the case, would have immediately strait-waistcoated him as having at last developed the long-waited-for inherited tendencies; and after that I felt it

only my duty to present him with an old lawn-tennis hat with a College Boat-club ribbon round it, which he accepted with great manifestations of gratitude, immediately going out in it for a walk, much to the admiration of the whole of the Buenos Ayrian populace.

The rest of his reformation was a simpler matter. I had various old clothes which I had worn out on the voyage, but which did very well for him, though they were rather large, and hung about him in graceful folds in such a manner that it was difficult to say whether he had got his legs through the sleeves of his coat, or if he had got any nether garments on at all under the waistcoat. I could not afford him any boots, so he had to be content with remaining in his original equipment of an odd pair of carpet slippers. However, I left him on my departure as proud as a prince at having anything to wear at all that could in any way be called genteel, and as I also took care to instil into him how wrong a thing it is to forget one's benefactors, I hope that when he attains that eminent position which I anticipate for him he will think of me.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN UNSATISFACTORY REGRESSION.

AND September passed on, and the days lengthened out, and earth began to resume her summer garb—of course it will be remembered that I had got over to the other side, where they do things wrong way up—and my injuries amended, and by-and-by the doctor told me I could get up every morning in the ordinary way—somehow, such is the perversity of human nature, I didn't feel to care about doing it so much now I was allowed to—and go and sit out on the balcony running round the *patio*—I am shaky about my Spanish, it is getting so long since I had to use it, and I'm not sure that I've spelt that word right—and enjoy the sun. In ten days more at the outside, he said with a sigh, I should be fit to leave.

The doctor and I had by this time got on quarrelling terms. He being aged thirty-two at the most, had taken upon himself to order me, being of full age, and, I considered, quite capable of settling those things for myself, to extinguish my candle at ten o'clock, and sometimes would come in to see me do it. I told him I might just

as well have been a mere lad at school, and that I didn't see any fun in coming into hospital if I was to be subjected to petty annoyances such as this. He had never supposed that I had meant to have any fun when I came to him, so I told him he must have a very poor opinion of his own powers of amusement, after which he caved in. I kept my candle, too; that is, I always lit it after he had been round—for in spite of my always advocating the doctrine of every one having a right to do exactly as he likes, especially when I am the particular person in question, I must say I have a peculiar respect for authorities when I do come across them; something of the same feeling that the mob evince when the policeman comes round the corner on to a meeting for the abolition of everything.

Bridget lent me an arm, and Peter followed with an arm-chair that reminded me somewhat of a dentist's, all fitted up as it was with appliances to hold every separate article that even the most exacting of sitters might require, and another chair and my literature. This last item had by this time been reduced to a very small compass, so diligent had I been in my studies during my stay in bed. I had finished all my friends' books, and had now to fall back on the hospital library, which consisted of the first four volumes of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and "Æsop's Fables." Besides these, of course, I had "Lothair," but with the Encyclopædia at hand I was not quite reduced to that yet. I studied that work very attentively, and I think when I had finished it,

I could have stood a very good examination in most of the subjects which it embraced so far as it went; but of course the examination would have had to be adapted to my reading: for instance, I could have given very passable answers on any subject concerning Counterpoint, but it wouldn't have been fair for the examiner to have perplexed me with interrogatories as to Music in general.

I used to be moved out every morning after breakfast, and propped up on a combination of pillows, and left to muse for the greater part of the rest of the day. The change did me good, I suppose, some ways; for one thing, it enlarged my outer world a little. It was still limited, however, to the courtyard of the hospital; the building ran round three sides of this, and the balcony was situated on the level of the first story. In the middle of the courtyard was the doctor's garden, in which the patients were allowed to walk if they could, and supposed to work if they would, but this latter part of the arrangement they did not seem so willing to acquiesce in. It was the custom, I found, for the nonpayers to make some sort of recompense for the care they had received by helping to keep this garden in order for a short time after their convalescence, but at the time I mention, the white-washing of the outside in preparation for the summer season was going so, and most of them seemed to prefer helping at that, or pretending to help, by putting up ladders in unsafe positions and climbing up them when the doctor wasn't looking,—presumably with a view to qualifying for admission to the accident ward, and

so getting another spell of leisurely invaliding,—to doing the wholesome and easier work that they were told off to. Then, too, whenever there was a public holiday, which at Buenos Ayres happens on every saint's day, and consequently on an average four times a week, their friends would come to see them, and they would spend the rest of the day chatting with them; so, altogether, the doctor's vegetables did not receive too much attention. The only thing in the garden that had really attained any height was a telegraph post that grew in the middle. It was one of a line extending from the town to the port, some fifteen miles distant, but owing to some difficulty between the Government and the company putting it up, the wires had never been attached.

After I had finished the Encyclopædia, I took to basking a good deal, and I found it a very enjoyable process. I am afraid my intellect must have been reduced to a very weak state to have enabled me to do nothing so well, but I could lie for hours and bask, not even thinking, and not even sleeping, but with my mind an absolute blank. I never seemed to want to do anything till I had gone to bed, and then fifty things would flash upon me which I might have employed myself with, and might never again have such uninterrupted opportunities of doing again. And I used to exclaim to myself, like the Roman Emperor of old, "*Perdidi diem!*" and resolve not to do it again; but it was all of no use; when next day came, there I was, basking away just as hard as ever; my life had resolved itself into a daily

routine of getting up, basking through the whole of the day, and going to bed again.

But the ten days decreed to me gradually drew to a close, and at last the night arrived when I felt that next morning I should be free at last. The doctor invited me to dine with him in his private room that evening, and we drank a bottle of wine together. I went to bed in something like my old spirits, and meditated myself to sleep over a proposed arrangement of my possessions in my various portmanteaus and bags.

I had been taken extra care of during the last few days previous. Amongst other things, my injured limb had been placed under an iron cage, in shape something like a bisected eel-trap, to prevent the bed-clothes rubbing against it. That night, for the first time since being in the hospital, I was troubled with dreams, and my visions took the form of a football match, in which I took a prominent part; though it is odd that they should have done so, seeing that in my calmer moments football is a pastime to which I have always had a rooted aversion, partly on account of my having been compelled to play it when a small boy at school, but I think chiefly because I have always had compunctions about kicking other people's shins, and I never found other people entertain the same feelings with regard to mine. But on that night I distinguished myself in a marked measure; cheered on by crowds of spectators I dribbled the ball again and again through the opposing hosts, who in vain endeavoured to stop me, and secured goal after goal for my side; I gave and received

hacks, but regardless of the pain, pursued my triumphant career, and when I woke in the morning I found that my other leg had collided violently with the iron cage, and there was just as large a hole in it as there had been in the other!

CHAPTER XXIII.

BUENOS AYRES FROM A NEW POINT OF VIEW.

THE doctor said, "Three weeks." I didn't make any reply, because I was afraid of losing my temper; but Bridget had sorted out and arranged all my boots in a row just within reach by my bedside, in view of my expected departure in the morning, and all I did was to heave them one after the other at the water-jug over against me by the opposite wall; I followed them up with all the George Eliots and other literature that had accumulated around me, and lastly, I sent "Lothair" after the rest. I didn't succeed in hitting the water-jug, but that didn't so much matter; in the end I felt better.

Looking back on it all now, though I say it that shouldn't, I can't help admiring the fortitude I displayed under those trying circumstances. But maybe it was that I had become like a hardened criminal, perfectly regardless as to what became of me. In one or two days, I had got so far as even to joke with the doctor on my misfortunes, asking him in the bitterness of my soul if he hadn't better cut off all the defective parts of me, and send the

rest home before it met with any further accidents; or suggesting that, as I seemed fated to afford so much amusement to the medical profession, he had better articulate me and either hang me up in his own laboratory, or else dispose of me to some other doctor—of course with the provision that I should go shares in the profits—to be waggled about for illustration of lectures. He made allowance for me, however, and did not resent these bursts of irony; indeed, I think in his heart he really pitied me as a friend; but for all that he couldn't resist the chance of trying another experiment on me. He first rubbed me all over with nitric acid, which turned me as black as a nigger, and tickled me frightfully, and then he rolled me up in cotton wool so that I couldn't get at myself to scratch, professing that he intended it as a buffer to guard against my bumping against anything else; and then he built a sort of party-wall down the middle of my bed to prevent the leg that had been originally the bad, but was now the sound one, from catching the injury back again from the new offender. Then he left me in about as uncomfortable a condition as a mortal could pretty well hope to enjoy.

It must have been a great struggle for him, I know, between his kindly disposition towards me and his medical enthusiasm, and I can forgive him for that in the weakness of his human nature the better sentiment did not prevail; but in spite of his efforts to disguise it from me, I could see that he had begun to regard me in a new light, not merely as a patient, but as a Subject. He carried

this new feeling so far as to take almost unwarranted liberties with me; he brought all his doctor friends in whenever they came to see him, and trotted me out—metaphorically, of course—for their inspection, and at last I once even heard him actually refer to me, in so many words, as the Subject; but then I thought it was time to interfere, and I kicked, that is, I protested, because I couldn't really kick, and I told him I wouldn't stand it, or lie it either, and thenceforward I must acknowledge he refrained from repeating the offence, seeing that he had trespassed too far on his privilege. I saw a new doctor every day, sea-doctors and land-doctors, and even Ockern so far forgot himself as to come down one day and gloat over me; they used to come in and overhaul me, and then retire and draw up reports on me addressed to imaginary authorities, and sometimes propose new treatments, all of which, either with modifications or without, the doctor used to try on me. I have had so many as thirteen different treatments going on at the same time on me. The only thing, however, that really bothered me was the constant changes that they suggested in my diet; one day I was fed up till I felt that I must go out for a good run to work it off or else die, and another day I was reduced till it only wanted another hour of starvation to finish me off that way; but thanks probably to an old-fashioned gentleman of portly habit who recommended at an early stage that I should be allowed claret to drink, which the doctor ordered, and then forgot to knock off again, I pulled through. And, indeed, that after all there

can be no real harm in doctors, I think I am at this moment a living proof.

A brilliant idea flashed across me during this epoch. It was a theory that I had often promulgated before, but which when moving about and with so many other things to think of, I had never been able fully to carry out. It was founded on the glorious advancement in modern times of the influence of the Press. I had often laid it down in Debating Societies and other places where one does lay down such things for argument's sake, as a fact too often overlooked by those who are always lamenting their inability to roam, that if they will only content themselves with sitting quietly in their own rooms and reading the papers attentively every day, they will know a great deal more about the events taking place around them or even in remote parts of the globe, than if they go fussing about in search of what they can see for themselves. It stands to reason that however hard they try they cannot overthrow nature's rule, that they cannot be in more than one, or even say two places at once, whereas the daily papers have facilities to enable them to be so. Now it struck me, or indeed it rather forced itself upon me of necessity, as I couldn't put myself at the time into a position to hold a book comfortably, and a newspaper, from its lightness and the ease with which it can be doubled up into a small compass, being the only form of literature which I could conveniently indulge in, that as I couldn't go and investigate the peculiarities of Buenos Ayres for myself, the

best thing to do, so as not to go home totally ignorant of the locality which I had travelled so far to see, was to study the local journals.

The universal spirit of enterprise had extended itself so far in a journalistic direction in Buenos Ayres that there were no less than seventeen daily papers circulating in various languages. How they all managed to pay their way, if they did so at all, is a problem to me, especially as the doctor told me each of them always sent him a free copy, and he believed they did the same to every one else of note; and as everybody is of note that is anybody at all out there, the list of actual subscribers cannot have been very large. There was one thing that perhaps partly compensated them for their liberality, and that was, that they went in largely for advertisements; I may even say largestly, for the proportion of news to advertisements in most of them was as one to four; in fact, sometimes the news had to be crammed away somewhere into the corner of a supplement.

The doctor acceded to my request that I might see some of the papers, and brought in his whole stock. I rejected the Spanish, French, and Italian papers at once, as involving an exertion of intellect, as well as a manipulation of the dictionary, that in my enfeebled state I did not feel competent to undertake. Besides, a cursory glance at them, followed by an inspection of the English papers, showed me that some of them must have copied from some of the others, or all of them from all of the others, a word here and there that I was personally acquainted with in the different lan-

guages giving me a clue, like the Rosetta stone; and this being so, I thought it best to save myself further trouble by confining myself to the language I had been brought up in. Some people may exclaim, how very foolish of me to lose a chance of mastering so many languages so easily, but I should like to see them in my position, and if they did otherwise, I should give them credit for being stronger-minded than the generality.

The English papers were the *Standard* and the *Herald.* There was a third, but it was at that time in abeyance, the editor having put up his shutters and gone away on a holiday to England. Their news was chiefly confined to local items, as the telegraphic correspondence with the outer world is not large, mostly coming from the United States through the Havas Agency, which has the monopoly out there, that estimable man Mr. Reuter not having yet established a footing in the country. When the local items ran short, and the *Herald* hadn't any American exchanges to fall back upon for short stories or conundrums or something of the kind, and the *Standard,* which professed to be conducted on stricter English principles, and scorned such shallow devices as anything of the *feuilleton* nature, had not a sufficiency of advertisements to fill up its columns, the editors either resorted to puffing their own merits, or else to casting aspersions on each other's personal characters, or those of their ancestors, in a way that would have rendered them liable to an action for libel in the Old World, but was quite permissible in a land of universal

freedom. What European news there was only appeared when a ship came in, and the editor managed to secure papers of the date of her sailing. I gathered that even in Buenos Ayres English politics had a certain influence on the daily literature, for the *Standard's* news always smacked of the *Daily Telegraph*, whilst the *Herald* evidently cribbed from the *Daily News*. Even then the intelligence supplied was not of the most satisfactory nature, the system they adopted being a simple one of cutting out the whole of the summary column of the respective English papers named, and introducing it bodily into their own journals; and perhaps it was almost unexciting enough to read about things of greater importance that had happened at least four weeks back, and the consequences of which one was never likely to learn, as the next abstracted summary would have originally been compiled long after the whole affair had been forgotten and put away as a matter of history; without one's having to be told that "Yesterday, before the Lord Mayor, a young man of respectable appearance, who gave his name as James Blank, was charged with purloining a gold watch and chain, &c., &c. . . "The prisoner was remanded," which one knew had been only inserted in the original, to begin with, because the printers wanted copy to fill up the column, and might just as well have been snipped off the bottom when the Buenos Ayrian editor was at his labours with the scissors. The news I accumulated about my native land was most unconnected, and for all the local papers could tell me, I should

never have been any the wiser if it had gone to smash altogether, and no further items had been able to be forwarded; but, fortunately, the doctor received private instalments of the *Weekly Times*, which I devoured with avidity, and so was able to a certain extent to fill up the gaps. The United States' news, coming as it did more regularly and consecutively, did perhaps interest me more; the rather because at that time President Garfield was lingering on his death-bed—he had been shot just before I started on my voyage. But even the telegrams narrating the ups and downs in his progress were of the very shortest nature, and very soon read, and so, though the very sight of a newspaper had set me craving for the news of the world, in the end I had to go back to my original reasons for asking for the loan of the journals, and content myself with a study of the Argentine Republic as depicted on paper.

I waded through the whole of both papers every morning. I began with the advertisements, which, being most of them constantly repeated, I soon got to know by heart. From them I acquired a certain amount of information as to the agricultural prospects of the country. I learnt that it was not so backward as not to require most of the artificialities of civilization, the steam-plough, the reaping-machine, the wire fence, and the patent medicines for various ailments of cattle that one would hardly have thought had found their way out there at such an early stage as the first eighty years or so of a state's existence. I went on with the shipping intelligence, and entered deeply into

the Ensenada question, which consisted, and I think still consists, in a discussion as to whether the Republic is to run a mucker and plunge headlong into the scheme of dredging the estuary of the Plate so as to form a channel for large ships to come right up to the Mole—according to the designs that have long existed on paper, and can be seen at any time between the hours of ten and four, if any of the clerks happen to be at home, on application at the office—and so swell that bulwark of a rising country, the National Debt—or whether it shall content itself with the views advocated by the more moderate party, that the present port of Ensenada, twenty miles down the river, shall be improved, and a more efficient railway system to connect it with the capital be opened, and then consider how the lesser expense shall be defrayed. Then I studied the politics, and weighed the respective merits of the Nationalists and Provincials in the Assembly, the one party wishing to take away all the power, almost amounting to a suzerainty, that the province of Buenos Ayres had till lately exercised over the rest of the Argentine Republic, and make the capital a mere centre for representative government; and the other scorning to hear of this plan, and declaring its intention, if said plan were carried into effect, of cutting the whole concern altogether, and moving off to establish a government of its own at the above once or twice-mentioned place, Ensenada. Ensenada, by the way, their bone of contention in so many respects, seems to have been the *beau idéal* of everything perfect with one

section of the Buenos Ayrians. Its etymological derivation, as far as I could make out from my dictionary, signifies "Nothing-in-itself." I offer this for the attention of any one who may like to find anything in it analogous to Utopia.

But it would be tedious if I were to go on taking in order the contents of the papers and the impressions conveyed to me thereby. Suffice it to say, by way of summarizing my researches, that at the end of them I arose a sadder but a wiser man with respect to many of my notions about Buenos Ayres; sadder because so much of the Beautiful had been dispelled from my vision, but wiser because I had learnt what is better than the Beautiful, viz. the True.

I have already noticed how uninformed both myself and all my friends had been before I started as to—well, to take the perhaps most trivial instance, the whereabouts of the Plate. Everybody knew it was a country, or a district, or something of the sort in South America; but as to its exact position, geographical or political, and what it had or had not to do with Chili or Peru, or Patagonia or Brazil, or any of those other places in that direction, the general run of ideas was very vague. Indeed, when I got out there, I found these mistaken ideas on the part of my relations very inconvenient in the matter of my receiving letters from them. I got one or two that were addressed to Buenos Ayres, but they were like the newspapers, and only contained news that was practically of no use, if one hadn't got the letters preceding, which said letters had been sent off to

Monte Video, the only intimation of their having been sent at all being some casual reference to them in the one that did reach me, something of this nature: "You remember what I told you in my last about So-and-So—I suppose you got that letter all right? I wasn't sure if you were going to put up at Buenos Ayres or Monte Video from what you said when you wrote from Rio, and I sent it to Monte Video, but I suppose you can get across the water at any time and fetch it,"—&c.; the remainder of the sentence being a sequel to some previous anecdote about the said So-and-So, but without any knowledge of said previous anecdote, absolutely pointless in its remarks; the writer being apparently under the impression that Buenos Ayres and Monte Video were situated in about the same relations as London and Southwark; whereas London and Paris would be considerably nearer the mark.

But how easy it is for us to remain in ignorance of a thing—I am going to moralize a bit now—until the veil is some day lifted from before it, and we find ourselves in the possession of facts of whose existence we never dreamt before! When I had got on board the steamer for Buenos Ayres, I found myself in an entirely new circle of society, one for which Buenos Ayres was the world, and which seemed surprised that there could be any one not minutely interested in the whole of its concerns. And as I proceeded on the voyage and eventually got to the other end, and then located myself in hospital, where I had both opportunity of carefully studying the papers, and

of being interviewed, as well as by the doctors, by some of the leading British residents, such as the Vice-Consul, and the directors of the Great Southern Railway, and others—who, being connected with the hospital as trustees or otherwise, considered it their duty, now that I seemed likely to become one of the permanent fixtures there, to come and see what repairs required to be executed in me—as I proceeded, I say, or remained stationary, as the case might be, in my travels, and acquired more and more information about the country, my mind became more and more convinced of how small the world is that we actually live in, and how easily we are contented with the little we know, or think we know, about what is going on beyond it.

Buenos Ayres, then—to express myself in the most elementary form, which I take to be excusable, considering the nature and origin of this work—is a province of about the size of England, forming part of the Argentine Republic, which is a territory of about the extent of Europe. I may as well say here that I took none of my measurements myself, and as I got them all second-hand, I won't be responsible for any of them. And for the same reason a great many other of my data, though I find that, according to precedent, they are quite necessary to a book of travels, should be received with caution. Buenos Ayres, the city, is the capital of the Republic. It has its Park and its Opera; it has unlimited trams, which I have already noticed, and its incipient Cathedral, and its gas-works and drainage system—though the

latter, by the way, for the usual reason, want of funds, is as yet unconnected with the houses, and rather mixed up with the wells. It has all the newspapers I have mentioned, with a Post-office in an advanced state of incivility, quite equal to that so often met with in older countries—I found that out for myself: query, why are civil servants usually so rude? It is going to build a magnificent system of docks, when it can either get the money to do it with, or a majority in the Assembly to do it without.

In fact, Buenos Ayres, when one gets there, is by no means the outlandish place that we unenlightened ones on this side of the water are too apt to think. There is not an Indian within three hundred miles of it. There are no wild *ranchos*, and the *haçiendas* have almost all disappeared: the Pampas have been mostly ploughed up for miles round, and there is only one *gaucho* left in the place, and he is kept on show with a pension by the Government. As for earthquakes, they have never been heard of, and the idea of frequent revolutions is indignantly repudiated by the inhabitants. They have only one every seven years on the change of Presidency, and then it is only a matter of form, and conducted on the most orderly of principles; the man who can afford to treat the army at three shillings a head being preferred to the man who can only do it at half-a-crown. To carry arms is quite unnecessary; it is true some people have a way of firing guns down the street at nothing in particular, but it is only as a pastime, and not with the

intention of hurting anybody, so if any one gets hit, he has no one to blame but himself for intruding on other people's amusements.

As for the Argentine Republic as a whole there can be no doubt, for the inhabitants all say so, and they ought to know, that it is *the* rising country of the world. All the rest of the world is played out, and the great tide of trade and agriculture is gradually—very gradually, I should say privately—but steadily settling in that direction. There are endless natural resources, and all that is wanted are inhabitants. At present the country is rather sparsely populated, and it is rumoured that when the deputy comes up from some of the outlying provinces to sit in the Assembly, the Government has to send down a hired man to look after the premises; but with the constantly increasing flow of immigration it seems not unlikely that all deficiencies in this respect will in time be rectified. The population, as I have already intimated, is of a most mixed sort, consisting of representatives from almost every nation under the sun—English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, French, Germans, Italians, Russians, Persians, Elamites, and dwellers from the parts beyond Mesopotamia. The natives are by far in the minority, and it is quite unnecessary, as I found for myself in time, and much to my joy, to learn the language, as no one seems to understand it; one's native tongue, assisted by a few gesticulations, will get one anything one wants.

There is one slight drawback to the immediate advance of the Republic to that foremost place

which it is eventually to hold among the nations of the world, and that is that there is no particular money. The professed unit is a dollar, whose original value was about four and twopence, but somehow or other it has dropped the four and only the twopence remains, so that all transactions are carried on in twopences. Everything is done in bank-notes. I formerly had been wont to look with somewhat of reverence on a bank-note, but by degrees I became so used to receiving a bundle of twopenny bank-notes, and cramming them anyhow into my pocket, that I began to fear that by the time I returned home I should have lost all respect for them whatever. However, all this is improving as the natural resources are yearly becoming more and more opened out by immigrants; and even while I was there, as I learned from the finance column in the papers, the National Bank had been enabled to coin almost 500*l.* worth of gold, most of which was immediately bought up at a price considerably above its normal value to be kept as a curiosity.

What particularly struck me both in what I read and what I saw about Buenos Ayres—of course I speak quite open to correction—was that in spite of its desire to be considered a miniature Paris, it is as yet a city really purely devoted to commerce. The talk is of nothing but commerce. No interest is taken in European affairs, except so far as money can be made out of them; hence the slackness of the papers in providing news of a more extraneous nature for their readers. At the dinner-table, in the drawing-room, in the Park,

as I found when I could move about more in society again, all the talk is nothing but shop, shop, all day long, till one almost begins to long for some one to resort to the weather as a variety in the entertainment; but there is no refuge from it; the West End has not as yet split itself off in Buenos Ayres—I suppose it was just the same once in London—even the ladies partake of the commercial spirit to a degree, and the only thing to be done is to conform to the custom of the country. The uncommercial traveller finds himself here like the idle little boy in the spelling-book: nobody has any time to afford him, unless he can reconcile himself to getting up a little "shop." The Park and the Opera aforesaid are only regarded from a commercial point of view, and taken as a sort of dose from absolute necessity, because it has been found that no mercantile man can keep to his business without some sort of relaxation. If we at home take our pleasure dismally, the Buenos Ayreans take theirs commercially. The true Buenos Ayrean, native or imported, goes to the Opera systematically three times a week, and every Sunday he tears himself reluctantly from his counter or desk, as the case may be, and goes up to the Park, where he drives, or rides, or walks round and round a given circle as hard as he can for a given time, and then, with a sigh of relief that that duty has been got over, he returns to his business. And when a man has made his fortune, and need no longer labour, he dares not remain, but goes back to Europe to enjoy himself.

There was one serious wake-up while I was there;

that was when President Garfield at last died, poor man. Both the English papers began by only noticing his death, but then a happy thought struck the *Herald* to bring itself into prominence by getting up a demonstration in his honour. "Shall we of this city," it asked, in an indignant sort of way, as if any one had proposed that they should, "rest content with a mere verbal expression of our grief for one who has done more than any one to link our Republic with the United States? No, let us," &c., and then it went on to propose what they should be let. Then the *Standard*, which had been before a little inclined to overlook the event in its endeavours to be as English as possible, took up the chorus, "Shall we, &c.?" and all the foreign papers fell into the scheme, and finally a meeting of editors was held and the manner of the demonstration was arranged. It took place on the same day as the funeral, and I read the whole account in both the papers. There was a tremendous flocking of editors, lawyers, doctors, and members of other not absolutely commercial professions, into the Great Place of the city; then there was a vast deal of drum and trumpet playing and speechifying and "Vivas," which last, considering it was a funeral demonstration, must have seemed a little out of place; then the demonstration shuffled themselves somehow or other into a procession, and went for the American Embassy, where they saluted the Stars and Stripes, and then dispersed quietly to their businesses; and next day, only I did not learn that from the newspapers, but from private sources,

the editors were all charged before the authorities for making an obstruction in the streets, and on the *Standard* and *Herald* remonstrating, they were heavily fined for libel, or at any rate for making false assertions as to the liberty of the Press.

The police intelligence was sometimes rather exciting. There was a body-snatching case, in which some enterprising persons wrote to the police to inform them that a coffin containing a wealthy lady who had died shortly before had been abstracted, and demanded large sums if they should bring it back again. Of course skilled detectives were speedily set upon the track, and soon succeeded in capturing three persons who might very well have been the offenders ; at any rate, no doubt they did just as well. However, the body was not forthcoming, until one day it struck one of the afflicted relatives to go and look in the vault, when they found the coffin and all just as it had been placed at the funeral ; and the arrested persons eventually proved to have had nothing to do with the affair at all, so were dismissed with a caution.

Another case which may be quoted as an instance of the deliberate way in which justice is dispensed out there, was one where four sailors had been in prison for four years awaiting their trial for a supposed murder, and were ultimately released on the real culprit turning up in the shape of a female lunatic. As the murder in question was that of the said female lunatic's own infant son, it seems hard to say why the

innocence of the sailors had not been established before, unless it was that the authorities thought they might thereby have laid themselves open to a charge of hurry.

But all this time I was gradually mending, until at last the doctor announced for the second time that I was very shortly to be freed from my bondage. He spent the last few days of my subjection to his care instructing me carefully how I was to behave myself if I did not wish to be back again into hospital shortly, which I thought particularly disinterested of him. He then bandaged up my supports in indiarubber arrangements till they looked more like badly turned table-legs than anything else, and for the last time I rose from my hateful couch, and followed by the butler and the watchman, and Peter, each bearing a portion of my luggage, I proceeded downstairs for the first time for several weeks. The doctor stood at the bottom, eagerly watching me as I cautiously descended, in the hope that something might give way, and I might fall into his arms to be his victim for another spell of time. But he was doomed to be disappointed. I arrived safely at the bottom, and stepping as gracefully as a person who felt as if he had a poker up his back and a pair of tongs by way of legs could manage it, into the cab that was awaiting me at the door, I wished him good-bye, and waving a final adieu to the hospital in general, I at last emerged into the world again on a new footing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HALF A LOAF IS BETTER THAN NONE AT ALL.

THE fly which carried me back into society was no very great improvement on the one that had carried me out of it. It jostled me about and jumped me up and down in very much the same way, and finally came to a dead stop before a pair of high red gates, with a lively representation of a coffin on one, and a hearse on the other. The driver got down, conferred for a short time with another party who had come out in answer to his knock, and then the doors having been swung back, the horse was led slowly into the yard, on each side of which was a row of sheds, where men were at work at things that looked ghastily like coffins. I began to think there must have been some mistake, and I had got into a cab that had been ordered for some other patient, but while I was thinking in what language I had better couch my explanations the driver came to the window and made signs and unintelligible sounds to me, which at last I interpreted as meant to induce me to get out and walk about a little. I did so, and watched the operation of taking the horse out, leading him to a forge at

the end of the yard, replacing a shoe which he had cast on the way, which was done in very much the same manner as I suppose it has been ever since Tubal Cain's time, and reharnessing him. Then we proceeded on to the hotel.

They seemed to have scraped along somehow without me pretty well, and things were going on much the same way as before. The Hotel-keeper was there, just as magnificent as ever; only there was a new James upstairs. The Vestrys had gone away somewhere into the country, which accounted for their not having been to see me for so long. I secured a room, and then went out for a little tour to look up all my friends, and announce my ability to accept any hospitality they might like to offer me. I went to Ockern's and Archatt's, both of whom immediately invited me to come and spend a night with them; then I went to the Bank, where I was warmly welcomed, as since I had borrowed from the chief banker I had disappeared, and I believe they had given me up as a bad investment, more especially as the mails that had come in in the interval had brought no further instructions as to my letter of credit. I obtained another loan, and then went and had my hair cut, as I thought a barber's shop would afford me about as good a view into the interior life of the country as I could hope to find in the short time to which I had to confine my researches; but I went by mistake into a French shop, where they cut according to the mode of Paris, and though perhaps I oughtn't to complain, as my hair had taken to grow at a tremendous pace

while I was being restored to health, and was now most inconveniently shaggy, I came out feeling more like a returned convict than ever. After that I felt I had done enough for the first day, so I went home and had my dinner; then wrote a long letter to my friends in the Camp to say I was coming after it as soon as I could, and to request that if there was any doctor within twelve miles of them they would either slay him or otherwise temporarily remove him, and then I went to bed. O the joy of that bed! It was the first time for nearly two months that I had slept on a spring mattress; I lay awake half the night enjoying it, and the next morning I didn't appear downstairs till considerably past ten o'clock.

I had a tolerably hard time of it for the next few days doing things. The day after my release was Sunday; I went duly to the English church, which was a large though rather plain building, and there met with many of my quondam Samaritans and Samaritanesses. The church struck me as being rather out of proportion to its congregation, but that was because there are so many different denominations among the English colony, each of which has its own place of worship. Then I went around and saw the Cabildo, a large edifice erected to hold the town clock, and I entered the Cathedral, and inspected the monument to General San Martin, who, the inscription informed me (being luckily written in Latin), was the liberator of Buenos Ayres and several other countries from the yoke, though whose yoke and when he liberated them from

it was left to the visitor's historical knowledge. There were several other niches left round the Cathedral, no doubt for future heroes of the Argentine Republic, when it can find time from its business to go in for heroes.

The doctor had invited me to join him in an expedition to the Tigre, a tributary of the Plate about as far off as Windsor from London, where the young athletes of the place do their boating; and now as I found it was close on the time he had proposed for me to meet him at the station, I turned my steps in that direction. I as nearly as possible came to grief again, as on lowering myself off one of the pavements to cross the road, I trod on one of the pieces of orange-peel that the lower classes seem to leave about here with as glorious a carelessness as in our own metropolis, and my legs not being yet quite under my control gave way beneath me, bringing me down in a very hard sitting posture on the tramway just as the car was coming along. I only just managed to get myself out of the way; though what I should have done if the car had gone over me and taken off my legs or anything of that sort, short of going down to the Mole and committing suicide, if I could find water enough to do it, I'm sure I don't know: I don't think I could ever have persuaded myself to go back to hospital again.

The station was crowded with Sunday excursionists all on their way to the Tigre, and I was considerably jostled about, and tumbled into trains by officials, and then tumbled out again by others

when they came round to examine tickets and found I hadn't got one; but the doctor didn't turn up after all, so I gave up that scheme and went home. I dined, and after that I ought by rights to have rested my leg on a chair. The doctor had told me to lay it up for at least two hours every day, but I found that I couldn't possibly afford all that time at once, so I had to do as the young ladies who belong to Reading-societies, and vow solemnly to read something for twenty minutes every day, and then have to fulfil their duty by flopping themselves into a chair whenever they can squeeze in a minute, and sitting with one eye on the book and the other on the clock till they are called away to some other engagement, the process being repeated until the prescribed time is made up. For the spirit of unrest had got hold of me, and as it had become tolerably cool, and was still early, my chief reason for having my dinner having been that I couldn't think of anything else particular to do, I set off on a pilgrimage to Palermo, which I had heard a good deal of, and was rather curious about.

Palermo is the name of the great park I have mentioned before, where all the people congregate. Reason of name unknown, unless it was bestowed for the same reason that beer places are so often designated Tivoli, which I suppose is with a view to making the thirsty traveller dream he is sitting among the vineyards under the blue Italian sky; rather an effort of the imagination, certainly, when the Tivoli is situate in the Adelphi,

where I found one the other day. But this is a digression.

I took tram to Palermo, of course. Every one takes tram in Buenos Ayres, even if they only want to go just round the corner; formerly every one used to ride everywhere. The very beggars used to beg from horseback; but now the wild steed of the Pampas has been superseded by the tram-car; and the beggars have accordingly moved in a body on to the trams. Even the cars are drawn by mules, of which the breed has of late been rapidly ousting that of horses.

It was easy enough to find a car that was bound for Palermo, as all the population left behind from the emigration to the Tigre were going in that direction, so the whole of the rolling-stock of the various tramways companies had been moved from their respective ordinary routes, and put on to that one. It was very handy of course, and was only open to the objection that it was very liable to, and, as it proved, actually did result in the different cars converging from the various parts of the town to a certain point, and then having to run one behind the other in slow procession for the last mile or so along a single line, the rivalry of the several companies evincing itself in a lavish expenditure of unparliamentary language on the part of the drivers, who appeared to be desirous of passing each other, a process, to say the least of it, likely to be attended with not a little risk to the passengers. However, we eventually arrived all safe, having only run off the line four times, one of which I suppose oughtn't

to count, as it appeared to be necessary for shunting us on to a completely different line of rails; and only once been in serious danger where we had to cross a line of railway, and the driver did not think it worth his while to wait for the passing of an express train which whirled past at the extreme rate of which express trains are capable in that country; which certainly isn't very great, but was quite fast enough to make it feel unpleasant for those unused to it when it took off the back buttons of the conductor's tailcoat as he sat up behind. When we had got as near as the already extended line of cars would let us, we were landed, and had to walk over a quarter of a mile of a Sahara-like plain till we arrived at the gates of Palermo.

The gates were about as impressive a part as any that I saw of the whole institution. They were very high, and were made of iron, with two lofty stone pillars with ornamental blobs at the top. They constituted the whole real defence to the park, as the rest of it only consisted of a low hedge, which it would have been quite practicable to walk through. But as the gates were there, I made use of them, and on entering the park found myself at once in the Rotten Row of Buenos Ayres, with a touch of the Lady's Mile combined with it, up and down which both carriages and equestrians were steering themselves with a marvellous dexterity. I sat down on a bench between a fashionably-dressed lady and a beggar, rather hoping that as I might to a certain extent be considered as the happy mean between the two,

one of them might take it into her or his head to open a conversation with me; but as both of them seemed proud, and not to want to do so, after I had watched the ever-changing stream, &c., &c., that was continually moving before me, for some time, I at last got tired of the feeling of being alone in a crowd, and went on to see if I could find anything else.

The greater part of the park was occupied for the time being by an Agricultural Show, so with a view to judging of the progress of the country in that line, I paid away sundry bank-notes and obtained admission to the enclosure. There was a very fine show of implements in a shed, very much of the same kind that I could have seen any day in a manufacturer's shop in the City at home for nothing, by adopting the simple expedient of walking in with an air of intending to make large purchases, being courteously conducted through the establishment and having the use of everything explained to me by the foreman, and then taking a catalogue and leaving with an intimation that I might possibly call again —a method of self-instruction that I have frequently practised with great success; and there were several exhibits of potatoes and other vegetables, most of which I recognized as home products, Messrs. Sutton, Carter, and the rest of the usual people coming to the fore here as well as everywhere else.

After I had expended as much interest in these things as I could possibly excite in myself, seeing that I was all alone, I again began to

feel rather bored, and turned to the horses in hopes of finding something original there, perhaps a genuine specimen of the wild horse of the Pampas, and then, to my great joy, I fell in with the Le Trants, who had come in from the country to see the Exhibition. In their company I felt a little happier. I accommodated myself to Mr. Le Trant's desire to walk round and see everything all over again, and managed to catch some of his enthusiasm at the marvellous advance of the resources of the country—to require all these old-world appliances to bring them out, I suppose—and then I went and sat down with Mrs. Le Trant and listened to the band of the Buenos Ayres Heavy Mounted Infantry.

Mrs. Le Trant, being quite at home at Buenos Ayres, was able to give me a good deal of information on things in general; after the usual amount of shop, I learnt from her the interesting fact that we were sitting on the precise spot once occupied by the firing-party when some hundred rebels were executed in cold blood by order of the Dictator for the time being. The only consolation on hearing of these sort of amenities was to think that if the revolution had gone the other way, and the other side had consequently represented the rebels, the said executed parties would probably have shot them.

Mrs. Le Trant also pointed out to me one or two of the celebrities of the place. I was actually enabled to look on the great McCall, inventor of potted ox-tongues, and the equally illustrious Van Looten, the manufacturer of cocoatina, in the flesh.

It always has afforded me great satisfaction to be able to view for myself such persons as I have often heard of, but whose existence, though I have long admired them, I have often been inclined to doubt, till I have realized them for myself. I remember entertaining precisely the same feeling with regard to Mr. Potts and Mr. Todhunter, whose books I had often read, but of whom I had scarcely dared to think, except as similar to Euclid or Algebra themselves, till I had actually met them walking about in the streets of Cambridge like ordinary persons with hats and umbrellas.

I finally left the Le Trants, and as the row of tram-cars outside was by this time stretching far away into the darkness, and it stood to reason that if there were any going back at all they must be at the other end, and if I had to walk to them I might as well walk the whole way into the town, I found my way to a railway station, to try and return in that way. It was only a small sand heap, with a box at one end of it, and if I hadn't chanced to turn aside to see why so many people were standing on the top of that particular sand heap, and then discovered there was a line of rails running alongside of it, I should have missed it altogether. There was a train expected, and of course, being an excursion train, it was late. After a short interval a man put his head out through a round hole in the box, and all the people rushed at him and a large amount of banknotes was shoved at him, which he grasped, and, popping back into his box, reappeared almost

immediately with a handful of tickets, which he dealt about liberally till he had got them to tally with the notes. I waited till the crush was over, and then I held up one finger to denote that I wanted first class, and put down banknotes on the edge of the hole till he handed me over a ticket, which I thought must be a sign that he didn't want any more. I don't think he cheated me very much.

The train arrived in course of time. The engines out there are, I believe, all English, as well as their drivers; the carriages are some of them on the Swiss system, with the doors at the end and a passage up the middle—I travelled in one of these on that journey, to make the sense of novelty as great as possible—and some are on the ordinary English compartment and foot-board system. We were delayed some little time while the train was being brought up in sections to the platform; just for form's sake, as the people didn't wait for it, but ran down the line and scrambled in wherever they could; and then we proceeded.

The line skirted the city, with a large flat plain on one side of it, and then took a sharp turn to the right, and ran in between the river and the south of the town, past the Cemetery, and into the Central Station. The pace kept up was good, in fact it was rather reckless for a foreign line, being, I should think, quite six miles an hour.

CHAPTER XXV.

SUNDRY VISITATIONS.

I WENT about a good deal on the different lines in the next few days. Archatt called for me one afternoon to invite me to dinner down at his bachelor establishment at Lomas, a suburb about four miles out of the town. I left my heavier luggage in my room in the hotel, and, taking a bag with things for the night, I accompanied him to another railway station about three squares off. This station was something like the Windsor South-Western station to look at, only rather larger; but as soon as the train had left it, one completely lost any idea of the railway being anything like an English one, as we instantly plunged into a narrower street than any I had yet seen in the town, and went at a good pace down it, the only warning given of our approach being an occasional whistle by the engine, with a bell clanged every now and then when another street crossed ours.

I kept my head out of the window the greater part of the way; it is a dangerous practice, I know, on the best-conducted lines, and was perhaps more so here, as there was no very great room to spare between either side of the carriages

and the walls of the houses; but I couldn't help being attracted by the agility exhibited by the natives, from the oldest to the youngest, in nipping up on to the doorsteps just in time to avoid destruction. I suppose it only requires practice, and the inhabitants of this street happen to get plenty of that, but it must be sometimes rather awkward for them while they are acquiring it, as an inch or so in matters like this makes such a difference. What would happen if a cart were delivering parcels at one of the doors when a train passed, I couldn't ascertain; I don't think a carter has ever been in a position to state his experiences after such a contingency. But we at last emerged from these comparatively close quarters, and proceeded in a more open fashion down a series of embryo boulevards on the outskirts till we got to the Lomas station.

Archatt first took me to dine with a select party of friends of about his own age and standing, all of whom greeted me as an old acquaintance, but none of whom I had the slightest recollection of ever having seen before, unless, perhaps, they were some of the same who had received me so kindly in the dark on my first arrival. We went to dine at a restaurant, where we filled up the interval before dinner with the discussion of cocktails. I use the plural number with regard to my friends, whose capacity for them seemed enormous; I only drank one, out of civility, and I had a hard struggle with that, and it spoilt the whole enjoyment of my dinner.

The dinner was good, and so was the wine;

after it, I believe, I so far forgot myself as to sing a song; however, the cocktail must be held responsible for any eccentricities in my behaviour; and then we adjourned to Archatt's *quinta*, where the others wished me to join them in a whisky and soda, or rather; I should say, in several whiskies and sodas; but I knew better, and got into bed before I became incapable of taking off my boots.

I didn't sleep very well that night, partly because the conversation after dinner had turned chiefly, as far as I remembered it, on some daring feats of burglary which had recently taken place in that neighbourhood, and Archatt had, when he had conducted me to my room, explained to me the ingenious method adopted by thieves out there for circumventing the strong bars that guard the ground-floor windows in all the houses, by inserting a fishing-rod between them and skilfully hooking out any small articles that may take their fancy, such as watches or rings, or even the sheets, which they can often abstract off one's bed without one's being aware of it; and partly because I was so frightfully thirsty, and had to make constant expeditions to the water-jug, and, after I had finished that, to the bath, which I also nearly emptied. However, I suppose I must have got in snatches of slumber here and there, without being aware of it, as next morning, when I got up to dress, I didn't feel so bad as I expected, though I lay awake thinking for some time before I determined to get out of bed, for fear lest when I got on my legs I might find myself very ill.

Archatt and his friends had been all up and

dressed a long time. We had coffee according to the custom of the country, and then they conducted me round to show me the internal economy of the establishment. The *quinta* was a nice large, square, one-storeyed house, with plenty of ventilation, the proportion of windows to walls being about four to one. In the winter, when the thermometer does not often stand above 50° in the shade, it is the custom to remove up into the town, as these suburban residences are generally considered too cold to live in at that season. There was a large garden at the back through which we strolled, admiring the peas and cauliflowers; I did not observe much fruit, as I suppose the beginning of October was rather too early to expect any.

The domestic staff at the *quinta* was not very large, only consisting of a black man, who served as everything from valet to kitchen-maid, and, I believe, his wife; but I only heard speak of her, as she remained somewhere in the back premises, only issuing on emergencies to cook. But as Archatt and Co. but rarely took any meals of a more substantial nature than coffee in the morning before leaving for town, and whisky and water in the evening on returning, these two were quite sufficient, as, of course, they had the whole day to themselves for sweeping and cleaning, which duties they seemed to perform most satisfactorily.

We left for the station about eleven, as Archatt hadn't to be at his office particularly early, business being slack, as there was some little time yet to mail-day; and so returned to my hotel,

where I had scarcely unpacked my bag, when Ockern came in and insisted on carrying me off with him to another railway station, to go and pay him a visit at his people's *quinta* out in another suburb—Flores. I told him my engagements would only allow me to come and dine with him, but he soon settled a convenient train for me to come back by after dinner in the evening, and off I was led again.

We went by the Great Southern Railway this time. The terminus of this was very much like the other, but it stood more in the outskirts, in the middle of a great square full of the two-wheeled carts which are driven up every day from the country to supply the city with provisions. Some of these carts come in by train, being taken off one set of wheels at the country station and put on to another at the city terminus; Mr. Vestry, one of whose pet undertakings in this country was this railway, told me the conveyance of these carts figured very largely as an item in the general traffic. The carriages on this line resemble those on the London and Brighton at home, and are rather stuffy.

Flores could perhaps hardly be strictly called a suburb, being rather a detached village, quite apart from the town, and with, as far as I could see, no consecutiveness as to the houses in itself. The line thither ran through long stretches of what I suppose were some natural product of the country, but looked like pea-sticks; here and there we passed an opening which represented a level crossing, and afforded a glimpse of long glades

extending away in both directions from the railway through the pea-sticks, and bordered with formidable-looking cactus hedges. I am going to find out, if cactus hedges will flourish in England; even if one can only succeed in raising an inferior quality—say a second or third-class cactus—it would be a most effective way of defending one's premises against the midnight vagaries of burglars.

We were met by the Ockern family conveyance, and driven over a road that, as far as jolting went, was only a trifle preferable to the Buenos Ayres streets, until we arrived at a little villa residence standing in its own garden, with a little gravel drive leading up to the door from a neatly painted and grained gate, just for all the world such a place as one might see any day without going further abroad than East Moulsey. The Ockerns were immensely proud of their success in making their home so like an English one; and for myself I felt a sense of peace and content rising in my mind at the sight, and almost wished I was going to stop on there for some time, as Ockern wished me to do, instead of having to start off in two days into the wilds in quest of further adventures. There was so little foreign about the whole of the proceedings that evening, that there is scarcely any need for me to dwell on them too long; I received an English welcome, was treated to an English dinner, and Ockern's sisters gladdened the heart of the wanderer by singing English songs after dinner. Then Ockern's father insisted on my having the carriage back to the station,

and I went away, having passed one of the really genuinely happiest evenings that I had had since leaving home.

There was no one at the station, but I fortunately had a return ticket, so there was really no need for any one. When the train came in, the guard got down and played at being several porters at once, running up and down the platform, shouting and opening all the doors to wake the passengers up to know if they wanted to get out, which, as it happened, none of them did; and I suppose this process, repeated at all the side stations, must have been rather trying to their tempers.

I had the whole of a first-class carriage to myself; the lights had all been put out at an early stage of the train's career for economy's sake—that they had been lighted at all the smell of extinguished wick testified—so I was in darkness the whole of the journey. The guard came to pay me a visit about half-way, and I had an animated conversation with him about whether I might be allowed to go back to the Central Station, as the Ockerns had advised me, as being nearer to my hotel, and, what was perhaps of more consideration, as the train only went there, with the return half of a ticket taken from the Great Southern terminus, without paying the difference? He was rather dense at first, and even the language of signs seemed to fail for once, but eventually I found him not proof against the temptations of a bank-note, which he put in his pocket, and then took my ticket with a wink signifying that it was all right, and as it was in

the dark I might pass without risk of further question. One touch of nature, &c. (Shakspeare), and I suppose railway-guards are railway-guards all the world over; but I dare say I paid a trifle more than I should have in the more straightforward proceeding.

We made a shunt a little outside the town, to transfer us to the other company's line—these two companies having running powers over each other's systems—and passed between what looked in the darkness like a long series of manufactories on each side, and so got to the station, where there was one porter, to keep up the greater dignity of the terminus. I wished my guard good-night, and made my way to the hotel, where everybody was up as usual, in spite of its being long past midnight. It was a puzzle to me all the time I was there when any of the staff ever went to bed; perhaps the constant vigils required of the attendants partly accounted for the frequency with which they changed; or they may have gone to bed in relays for a month at a time.

Next day, being my last before I started up country, was a very busy one. First I had to get up early and go to the Bank and persuade the chief there to advance me further money on the security of my countenance, which I couldn't leave behind, and my dishonoured letter of credit, which I could, in the hope that something might turn up about it during my absence; then as soon as I had got my money, I had to go and disburse most of it, some in getting my ticket for the river steamer up the Uruguay, some in settling my

hotel-bill, which by this time had attained somewhat alarming dimensions, and mostly in paying my hospital expenses. I walked down to the hospital, taking several places of interest on my way; I followed the course of the fighting at that memorable time when the British forces nearly took Buenos Ayres, but were eventually driven back, some say owing to the neglect of their officers to supply them with ball-cartridges for the occasion. Down the Calle de Reconquesta, where the townsmen celebrated their victory, then through the Plaza Victoria, where the vanquished laid down their arms when they had at last come to the conclusion that it was not much use trying to fight any longer with nothing but powder in their guns; into the chapel erected at the side of the Plaza, chiefly for the purpose of enshrining the flag taken on that occasion, as a proof that as the British can beat all the world, and the Buenos Ayreans can beat the British, there is only one logical conclusion to be drawn as to the prowess of the Buenos Ayreans; and then along the Calle de Defensa, up which the citizens retreated slowly at first, till they found out the real state of the case, while contingents of women and children harassed the invaders with brickbats and hot water from the tops of the houses; till I got to the hospital. It was a humiliating portion of my own national history to have to trace out, but it was as well to do it, as Buenos Ayres has not had much time to make so much history as yet that any of it could be spared.

The doctor was very angry with me for walking

so far, so I thought it best not to let him know how much I had been doing since I left the hospital; in spite of my being no longer actually in his clutches, I still held him in a certain degree of awe, something akin to the feeling one has towards one's former pastors and masters when one revisits school for the first two or three times; and when we had transacted our little business, which consisted in my handing over to him a sum to which the pleasure I had enjoyed in the hospital was in my opinion totally inadequate, and he had given me breakfast, he insisted on coming down to the corner of the street with me, to make sure for himself that I went back by tram. I obeyed him as far as round the corner, and then I had to get out to call at a shop to buy some flowers that my friends had asked me to take to them in the country, so I walked the rest of the way.

I went to see my old Welsh nurse that afternoon, as I had promised when she left the hospital. I found the address she had given me was in the same street as the hotel, so I didn't think it worth while to take tram. But I hadn't counted on the length of the streets in Buenos Ayres. Oxford Street used to be my conception of a long street, but that would be nothing to what they go in for out there. Of course, the town being built in a series of square blocks, the streets run the whole length of it; but the Buenos Ayreans have small ideas of variety, and it has not occurred to them to split their streets into sections with different names, and so relieve the monotony for the passenger; so when I mention that the official

number of my hotel was 12, and that of the nurse's house was 1024, and that the average frontage of the houses was ten yards, some idea may be formed of the distance I had to traverse. Indeed, I had to rest when I got to 563, as I felt my legs giving under me, and besides, a sharp shower of rain came on; 563, as luck would have it, happened to be an umbrella-shop, and the circumstances of immediate necessity and opportunity combined, or whatever the politically economical doctrine is, caused me to take steps for providing myself with an umbrella, as I had neglected to bring one from England. But it seems that the shopkeeper also understood something about political economy and the ultimate need, or whatever it ought to be again; I fancy I paid something like two guineas for that umbrella; I have it still, and shall bequeath it as an heir-loom to my descendants.

The nurse had gone out when I got to 1024, and there was only an old black woman to receive me, who at first I thought was deaf and dumb, as she didn't even try to speak in any language. I didn't know the Spanish deaf and dumb alphabet, so I was rather at a loss to convey to her what I wanted; but fortunately the nurse had evidently gone home so full of me that she had been spending a great deal of time in discussing me with her coloured companion, in whatever way she managed it, and so now I was received with ecstasies of joy by the latter, and very narrowly escaped being embraced then and there. After she had got over her first transports, she performed sundry

preliminary antics to show me that she was going to describe the nurse's movements, and then pointed up the street and held up fingers to show the hour she had gone out, and then into the house and held up more fingers to show the time of her expected return. I calculated that it would be too long to wait, so I nodded to show that I took it all in, and, having left a card, started back again.

I happened to see the door of what looked like a purely Spanish house standing open on my way back, and as I wanted to take home a general impression of the domestic economy of the natives, unmixed with any other national type, I strolled in to take a look round. There was a square court-yard with a balcony round it, and a well in the middle with an iron canopy over it sustaining the pulley and rope with which to draw up the bucket whenever the inhabitant did chance to require any water for washing or drinking purposes. But I hadn't much time for any further observations, as a pampered menial in a nondescript sort of livery came out from somewhere and intimated that if I hadn't any particular business there, I had better walk out again. As he was bigger than I, and in my then convalescent state I didn't feel equal to the tackling of my proper national quantum of foreigners, I thought better to retire into the street again with a graceful bow and a few words appropriate to the occasion. I considered his behaviour as towards a stranger who had merely entered in the most inoffensive manner for the sake of information singularly rude at

the time; but now I am not sure I shouldn't have done the same if I had been in his place.

I took a baker's shop on my way back, to which Ockern's uncle had directed me, in order to obtain a supply of his patent biscuits for my country friends, as a change for them from the ordinary Camp biscuit. I had written from the hospital, but I wanted to make sure that the baker had been able to make out from my letter, which had been a magnificent joint composition of my own and the doctor's and the vocabulary's, what it was that I wanted. Everything was as desired; my card corresponded sufficiently with my letter to show them I was the right person, and they showed me what looked like a large coal-sack, but which was really packed full of biscuits, and just about to be sent to me at the hotel, so I went on with my mind perfectly at rest as to all my commissions—which I can't say it always is; and perhaps my more incautious friends know why.

The Vestrys had just returned when I got back, so I dined with them and the British Vice-Consul, and received much coaching as to my impending expedition into the interior. Several more of the cousins came in afterwards and talked to the usual amount. One of them, however, made himself more interesting to me than usual, as he had taken a prominent part in the Revolution, and seized the occasion of me as a new hearer to get me apart on to the balcony and fight his battles over again. He was only a clerk in a private office in the ordinary course of things, but at this period he had come out strong in the public line;

he had taken charge of a battery that he found lying about somewhere, the proper troops attached to it having all been killed, or run away, and though he had no previous knowledge of the science of gunning, even having a very vague idea as to which end of a cannon the match ought to be put to, he had acquitted himself to such purpose that he had completely cleared the streets and the whole difficulty in a few minutes. But there is a good deal of jobbery still prevalent in the politics out there, so that he had been left unrewarded, and had been compelled to return to his office-stool and ledger after all, and was likely to remain there till the end of the chapter.

After the party had broken up I went to my room to commence the great undertaking of getting my things into their respective places in my baggage. This is always a source of vast labour to me, especially when travelling by myself: somehow or other, though, when I can get someone else to pack for me, the things seem to go in well enough. When I have been making a stay anywhere, and I have had to take them out as I want them, and the time comes to get them back again, they always seem to have enlarged themselves in some inconceivable manner, so that it is impossible to stow them away into their original spaces. Now this was exactly my case at the time I am speaking of. When I had started from home, my sister had packed for me; when I left the ship, the steward had managed to get my things in all right; and when I came out of the hospital, the joint efforts of Bridget and Peter had succeeded

in mastering the difficulty; but now I was left all to myself, and here I was with a problem before me; given what looked like the contents of at least eight large trunks, and only four small portmanteaus and a bag to put them into. I couldn't pursue my usual plan under such circumstances, which is to sally forth into the town where I may happen to be staying, and buy further bags till I have got all my possessions out of sight, as it was nearly midnight, and the shops were all shut, and I couldn't wait till next morning as my steamer started first thing; so there was nothing to be done but to sit down and think a little, and then suddenly start up and force the things into the portmanteaus till they were twice as full as they ought to be, and then struggle with the straps till they had been got to meet. The struggle was indeed a hard one; I and the portmanteaus rolled about over and over one another on the floor and conjointly made such a noise about it, that I wonder my neighbour underneath wasn't alarmed and didn't come up to see what was the matter; but they seem used to strange noises in Buenos Ayres, and I suppose, too, that it being a free country everyone may murder everyone else that he pleases, the common decencies of civilization only requiring him to be taken up afterwards; but I finally triumphed, and sat panting on the top of the last portmanteau, a little afraid to move, as I had felt something in my back go as I got the decisive strap to, and I wasn't sure if it was my spine, and I should fall in two if I got up. Fortunately it was only one of my braces, and I was going to

bed more happy—it was then about 3 a.m.—when I stumbled over something, and found all my boots standing in a row staring at me with an air of derision. I threw myself on to them and rolled them all up in my rug, trusting to luck that I shouldn't have to undo it on the journey; then I lay down in my clothes, lest I should oversleep myself and miss the steamer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON WE GO AGAIN.

THE Vice-Consul had warned me against the impositions of the boatmen about the Mole, and had advised me to be sure and secure the services of a certain Pedro, who appeared to enjoy the reputation of being the only honest man in Buenos Ayres; how he acquired it, or if he deserved it, is not in my power to state. Accordingly I had my fifteen packages, including my biscuit-sack and my young plant, which I flattered myself might deceive strangers into the idea that I was going into the interior to found a new colony, taken down to the Mole by the hotel porter, who while on the way looked like one of those gipsy vans one sees about the country in summer, all overhung with various and saleable commodities, and when they had all been put down in a heap, I took up my position in front of them to defend them against the crowd of boatmen who came round and snatched—like the Harpies in the Æneid—each at some one portion of my baggage. I kept them all at bay for some time, and only replied to their discordant cries in the various languages of the earth by a reiteration of the single word "Pedro,"

which was to realize the object of Diogenes' famous search.

It was not a question, however, of his not appearing when invoked: the Vice-Consul, in recommending me this receipt for the discovery of an upright Buenos Ayrean, had apparently overlooked the possibility of there being others not only dishonest *per se*, but enough so to trade on the name of an honest man. No less than six Pedros answered to my call, each one insisting that he and he alone was the only genuine article, and all others were spurious imitations; and under these circumstances, what was the unfortunate stranger to do? Their faces were no criterion; each was as ill-looking as the other; and if any of them was the genuine Pedro, I hereby recommend him—if perchance a copy of this work should ever find its way out to Buenos Ayres, and in time percolate to the lower strata of society out there, so that he may perhaps read it some day—I recommend him, I say, to go and get himself washed and shaved, and make himself generally more spruce, and perhaps then it will be easier to tell that he is really better than his fellows. But as it was I could only trust to chance, and as the six had now outflanked me and taken possession of my baggage between them, I could only adopt my old plan of throwing myself on the mercy of the one who had annexed the largest share, so as to incur the smallest risk of losing my all, and depute him to combat the other five for the possession of the rest. I thus saved everything, and then we shoved off from the shore

a little, and he rested on his oars, and jeered at the other disappointed Pedros, who were hurling imprecations at him, and insults at me, though I sat calm and unmoved amidst it all, as is usually my custom when I don't understand what is being said.

It became tiring after a time, however, and I also began to fear I should lose my steamer, so I gesticulated to him to move on, but I failed to produce any effect, as he was apparently waiting for something. This eventually turned up in the shape of a stout Frenchman, also bound for the steamer, who presently came down the Mole and hailed my boatman, with whom he seemed to be on an understanding, and, when we had drawn up alongside of the steps again, came on board, bearing under his arm a large frame containing a mounted genealogy of the patriarchs from Adam to Judas Maccabeus, which constituted the whole of his personal luggage. I was enabled under these somewhat incongruous circumstances to improve my Scripture knowledge to a considerable extent, as I sat on one of the side stern-sheets—with all apologies to any nautical critic if those seats running at right angles to the coxswain's are not stern-sheets—and he sat on the opposite one, holding the genealogy bolt upright as a sort of fence between us.

I have often heard people talk about being agreeably disappointed; I suppose it is from the love of human nature to have something to grumble at, that when they have got something they like, they complain at having nothing to vent their ill-

temper on; for my part I am disagreeably disappointed quite often enough to please me without making any good fortune an occasion of discontent. The present case was one of these disagreeable disappointments. Mrs. Vestry had taken the trouble the evening before to dilate to some extent on the comforts I was to experience on the river steamer, and I had been led to expect a kind of floating palace, with vast saloons lighted by electric light, and a commodious cabin all to myself with a four-post bedstead to sleep in, &c., &c.—indeed, I had entertained serious thoughts, should I find the accommodation very extra palatial and to my liking, of abandoning the idea of roughing it in the Camp, and spending the rest of my holiday going up and down the Uruguay. But when we came longside, the vessel was not larger than an ordinary penny steamer, and when, after judiciously seeing all my luggage safe on board before paying Pedro as small a sum as I dared, I scrambled up the side and walked into the apology for a saloon, and found nothing there but a long deal table and two very uncomfortable benches, with no private cabins at all but that appropriated by the captain, I began to think that either Mrs. Vestry had been intentionally taking me in, or else that she was gifted with a very powerful imagination. Then it struck me that I had perhaps got on to the wrong steamer, the more so when on examining my ticket I found it entitled me to a passage on the steamship *Rio de la Plata*, whereas all the appurtenances of the cabin I now found myself in were marked with the name *Onyx*; but

on applying to a gentleman whom I heard talking English, and who proved to be a cattle-farmer also going up country, he told me the fact was that the *Rio de la Plata*, though undoubtedly a fine ship in many respects, was unfortunately deficient in that rather essential part of a steamer, her boilers, and so had been condemned by the Captain of the Port, and the *Onyx*, an ordinary cargo-boat, substituted for her. So I had to forgive Mrs. Vestry; only it was a little hard that I should have pitched on that one uncomfortable voyage of the season. I said I would write to the *Times*, and went out to look at my luggage.

Two rude men seized me directly I got outside, and jabbered something at me, and on my failing to catch their meaning, proceeded to rifle my pockets until they arrived at my ticket. Then one of them held it while the other pointed to my luggage, which was standing in a heap apart on deck. I nodded to show them it was mine, and the first ruffian said, "You're a guy," which remark the other repeated while he hurled my things one after the other into the hold below. I didn't revenge the insult offered to my country in the person of one of her subjects by slaying the offender on the spot, because he was only really pronouncing the name of the province I was going to in the way it ought to be, which I hadn't known before. There was only the one other English passenger on board that I have mentioned, and he must have been of a very morose disposition, for as soon as he found me anxious to make conversation, he left the place he had taken

near me, and I saw no more of him for the rest of the time. Indeed I never saw him again, as he left at one of the intermediate stations, and I had not even an opportunity of exchanging the merest commonplaces with him. He was the only Englishman I met with in the whole course of my expedition who was not ready to make himself agreeable to a lonely stranger in some way or other.

The other passengers were two or three fat merchants of a similar type with my genealogical friend, and a party of soldiers, officers and privates, all mixed up in a delightfully republican fashion, on their way to one of the river fortresses. These last certainly made the place lively, only unfortunately, for obvious reasons, I missed the point of many of their best jokes, and the only part of them I could understand was that they were making a most confounded row. Presently, too, I was disturbed by an extremely forward waiter, who took me by the shoulder, and thought to eject me from my seat to make room for him to lay breakfast. British superior weight prevailed, however, and I had the satisfaction of seeing him —on my rising and losing my balance in my endeavour to lift my invalid leg over the bench, and so falling against him—totter back into a heap of plates and smash four of them. I went off to a sort of gallery at the stern, and sat on the side watching the rush of the screw till the breakfast-bell rang.

Breakfast consisted of purely Spanish dishes, and so I did not come off very well. I sat next the captain, who performed the usual prodigies

with his knife; but I couldn't get him to make a single intelligible remark the whole time, thereby failing in my object in sitting next to him, which was that as the captain of any vessel is everybody's common right, he requires no introduction to allow one to talk to him. I had found a conversation in my book with the conductor of a diligence, and I kept it open under the table in the hope that with a few slight alterations it might be adapted to the captain of a ship; but the worst of those manuals is that if the other person doesn't give the right answers you are stumped. After breakfast I returned to my gallery, and spent the greater part of the day studying a shorthand book I had bought in Buenos Ayres—this being my last phase of self-improvement—and doing exercises with its help out of "Lothair."

I can't say I attended much to the view; there wasn't much to attend to. All up the Plate itself there was nothing but a broad expanse of water on both sides, with an occasional bird, and one might just as well have been on the open sea for all the scenery there was to contemplate. We turned off to the right about three o'clock, and approached the mouth of the Uruguay, passing the great fort of San Martin, I think its name was—the "Gibraltar," or "some other impregnable fortress," according to the taste of the comparer, of the Plate,—about four, but just as there began to be something more worth watching, the dinner-bell rang, and I felt it my duty to go in and have another try at the victuals.

I made friends with a young subaltern at this

meal; that is, I got as far as passing him the salt, and he returned me a thousand thanks, and wanted to embrace me, and tried to induce me to eat an olive, which is a kind of condiment I abominate; and then I adjourned again to my old place. Some one had put a mattress out to air, and not seeing much chance of a bed anywhere else, I took up my quarters on it then and there for the night, meaning to give everyone else to understand by my demeanour, if I couldn't by my words, that I wasn't going to move from it for anybody. Several people came and looked at me as if they thought they would like the mattress, and at last there was quite a little crowd round me as the evening drew on, all evidently waiting for me to move, and each hoping to be the first to commit some overt act of entry, as we used to do at the fives'-court at Eton. But I hung on to my prize, and they eventually all had to go away disappointed.

Several little incidents of native life took place while I was lying there, all more or less interesting to a stranger. First I had an insight into the operation of concocting and discussing the native beverage, *matté*. This is done by four natives—though I believe there is no restriction as to numbers—sitting round a kettle, one of whom, who is chosen as dealer, puts his hand into a canister of some stuff that looks like advanced touch-wood, and grabs a handful, which he drops into a little round wooden vessel with a small hole at the top, and a straight handle sticking out of the side. (N.B. It is not part of the game to

wash one's hands previously; if they have been engaged immediately before in the manufacture of cigarettes, that only lends an additional flavour to the mixture.) Then he puts in a large quantity of sugar, and adds boiling water out of the kettle, and then inserts an instrument which begins like a peashooter, and ends in a sort of cross between a sugar-sifter and a salt-spoon, and mashes up the stuff inside well. When it is sufficiently mashed up he sucks at the top end of the peashooter, and, after inhaling enough to satisfy himself for a time, passes the whole apparatus on to his left-hand neighbour, who replenishes the vessel from the kettle and takes his suck, and so on till it has been all round, and the first gets another turn. (N.B. again. It is considered discourteous to wipe the end of the peashooter when one's turn comes.)

After the *matté* party another followed to play dominoes. They played in the Spanish fashion, and I did not take it in very well; and when they had gone, I was enlightened as to the South American way of cleaning lamp-chimneys, one of the stewards coming out to polish one previous to lighting up the saloon for the evening. I should not have noted this as worthy of remark but that I observed that it is apparently the custom of the country to do it with a carving-knife, which struck me as being somewhat singular.

Then the shades of evening wore on—or rather made preparations to drop all at once, as they do in these parts—and the inmates of the ship began to show signs of getting ready for bed. The chief steward came and gave one last lingering look at

me, as if in hopes that I should waver in my constancy towards my mattress at the last moment; but he saw it was no use, and so grunted something at me which I chose charitably to consider as the Spanish for good-night, and left for the interior. An elderly gentleman came out, evidently with a desire to be as private as possible, and performed his toilette for the next day, taking a fresh change of raiment out of his bag and completely renovating his attire, I suppose with a view to varying to as great an extent as possible that most monotonous of processes which we all have to undergo every day of our lives, dressing when we get up; and he grunted at me too, and went in, and I saw no more of any of my fellow-creatures till the morning.

The screw went on thud-thudding through the water, and the rudder-chains gave their occasional clank, but otherwise no sound disturbed the general stillness of the night. I rolled myself up in my rug—I had had to unpack all my boots and place them in a row alongside of my couch as if I were expecting an invasion of any number of nocturnal cats—and tried to go to sleep.

But I didn't. First because my legs ached so: I had rolled them up in a perfect network of fortifications before starting to guard against accidents, and I didn't like to remove any of these now, because I knew what an awful job it would be to get them on again; so I tried to forget I had any legs, but I found it as difficult as trying to forget one has any hands when one is introduced into a new party of people and wants to create a favourable first

impression; they asserted themselves in a most obtrusive manner, and utterly refused to be disowned by the rest of me. Then, secondly, I was most outrageously thirsty. I had been afraid of drinking water out of the bottles at table, both because the bottles themselves looked so dingy, and also because the liquid inside presented an appearance so strongly resembling that of the Thames at Waterloo Bridge, that not even seeing everybody else helping himself to it with great avidity could persuade me to lay aside my insular prejudices. And the wine provided, though good of its sort, left a treacly kind of taste in one's mouth that required washing away; so that altogether I think I may safely say I had about as good an experience of what the horrors of thirst are that any rational person who does not care to go out of his way into the middle of the Sahara, or into the Atlantic in an unprovisioned open boat, could wish to meet with. It was with great joy that, on feeling about feebly under the seat on which my mattress was spread, I put my hand into a basket full of oranges. I sincerely hope those oranges were put there for the use of the public; at any rate, I know I ate a very large quantity of them; I should not have thought the human frame was constructed to carry so many inside; but after eating them consecutively from one o'clock to four in the morning, I felt rather better; and then, having given up all ideas of sleep for the rest of the night, I got down off my couch, and went for a reconnoitre forward.

I had been warned by my friends in a letter

that, though I was to take my ticket to Conçepçion, I was on no account to let myself be put on board the tender coming off from there to pick up passengers from the steamer, as once I got there, I might as well be back at Buenos Ayres; but I was to watch for a little boat from the opposite shore, and drop myself and luggage into that, and insist on being carried to the Saladero—whatever that might mean: I think I associated it in my mind at the time with a kitchen-garden. I had also been warned that the steamer might very likely get to my destination at some very early hour in the morning, and I was therefore nervous of being carried past it into some wild and unknown region, whence goodness knew when I would return. I have a soul not above adventures at times, but I do like taking things comfortably, and I hadn't had a very large share of that just lately. So now I went forward to make sure against all accidents.

The saloon had been ingeniously altered into a sleeping-cabin, something in the same way as a Pulman car, and in passing through it I stumbled over, and if it had not been for my precautions, would have seriously barked my shins against several recumbent natives who growled at me, but luckily were too much overpowered by sleep to realize that I was anything more substantial than a bad nightmare. When I emerged on to the lower deck at the other end I saw all my luggage, including the biscuit-sack and the flowerpot, arranged in a row, evidently with a view to my disembarkation. The only part of my travelling kit, therefore, that I had to be anxious about was

myself. No one was about, however, but the engine-driver, who was sitting in a kind of cattle-pen railed off for his especial accommodation from the rest of the deck, and attempting to keep awake. I remembered the general rule of the country that all people in any way connected with steam-engines and the like are natives of the United Kingdom, so I tested the truth of it by addressing him in my mother tongue. He turned out to be a Scotchman, and from him I got all the information I wanted. Then, as by this time I had got tired of maintaining silence, which, though golden, can in time amount to an *embarras de richesses*, I entered on other topics of conversation with him, I found him what the newspapers describe as "a most intelligent man"—though why newspapers, by the way, should always take it for granted that the majority of people whom they have not previously known are intelligent, I don't exactly understand—and even inclined to patronize me; for instance, when he found that I was travelling about by myself with no particular object, he recommended me to go back at once and get something to do. He told me all about himself, too. It appears that engineers are treated with extraordinary distinction in South America; the natives have such exaggerated ideas of the mysterious nature of machinery, that they look on any one who is bold enough to undertake its management as next door to a superhumanity. This man had been made a Doctor of Science at once when he came out, and he had taken several prize medals for his skill, as well as other substantial rewards every

time he had safely conducted his steamer up and down the river without blowing her up. He told me he knew most of Shakespeare off by heart, and used to repeat a play to himself during each voyage, with incidental music on the steam whistle; he was on that particular run engaged in a meditative study of "Hamlet," and he had just offered to recite a few scenes for my edification, when a mate, or whatever official he was, came and seized me violently by the shoulder, and, pointing excitedly to the horizon, began jabbering at me as if he wanted me to do something at once. I appealed to the engine-driver, who told me all this meant I was to get ready for my boat, which was coming off soon; then he calmed the other man down, and helped me to carry my things to the starboard side of the vessel, in spite of the efforts of two or three other sailors, who turned up from somewhere below, and wanted to take them over to port.

Presently up came the tender from Conçepçion; everybody appeared from everywhere and rushed over to that side, and I was left alone with my luggage. I heard a shout from somewhere below the ship's side, and looking down, perceived a little boat—the long-expected boat—with a man in semi-undress standing up in it, and holding on to a rope that was hanging down from the railing. I said, "Saladero?" and he replied, "Si." He clambered up and helped me to get my luggage down without any one further interfering. I'm not sure how I got down myself; I know the little boat jumped awfully, and I have a sort of remem-

brance of being suspended for some little time at the end of a boat-hook with the river rushing along at express pace underneath me; but anyhow I descended safely at last, with no bruises worth speaking of, and when I had settled myself in the stern-sheets, the owner of the craft followed, and we shoved off without my having said good-bye or anything to anybody.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THERE AT LAST.

THE man that I now found myself face to face with in this small open boat in the midst of this wild waste of waters was not more beautiful to look at than the rest of his race; but circumstances allowed me no choice, so I must e'en make the best of him. There was a large and potential-looking knife lying at the bottom of the boat; I put my foot upon it, and tried to look as comfortable as I could. I don't know why, but I had developed a most extraordinary degree of nervosity in the course of my expedition.

After a few futile efforts at talking, I relapsed into silence, and sat watching him pulling steadily along and the shore as we gradually approached it, till we arrived at the mouth of a streamlet of about the width of the Thames at Staines, where he ran the boat ashore at the foot of a rickety flight of steps leading up to a shanty placed on the top of the bank. He helped me ashore, and hailed somebody who was presumably to appear above, and who actually did so after some little delay, a neat-looking English farming-woman, who greeted me with surprise, seemingly knowing

all about me, except that I was going to make my appearance at that particular hour of that particular morning. However, when she had got over her first transports, she sort of slid down the steps, and between us three we got all my things up to the top. I remunerated my man with sundry dollars, and he left for some place higher up the river, after calling down all manner of somethings on my head, which I concluded from the attendant circumstances were blessings this time; and felt better for them accordingly.

My new acquaintance now proceeded to inform me that she was the person who had married my friends' gardener; she had formerly been their household servant, but now, having been seventeen years in the service, all her sons and daughters had grown up and stepped into her place, which had been, as it were, put into commission, while she herself had been pensioned off as a kind of outpost on the estate, only going up to the big house when she was very much required. She also told me that I wasn't expected till the next steamer, and that my letter had not yet arrived, as all communications with the outside world came up those steps, and were thence forwarded to the family; though how she was to know which was my letter and which was not is beyond me, unless it was to be accounted for by the theory of natural feminine curiosity. But she said it was only a matter of a couple of hours or so of waiting, as she had sent off one of her children to ride up to report my arrival directly I hove in sight, and it was only three leagues off; and now would I

have such breakfast as she could accommodate me with?

Just wouldn't I? She accommodated me with good, though rather stodgy English bread, and heaps of eggs, and oceans of good English tea, out of a real Britannia metal teapot, with the hinge out of order, which recalled the old times when I was in the nursery at home. I had got up a roaring appetite, in spite of the oranges, and did most ample justice to all of it; nay, her accommodation so far suited me that by the time I had torn myself away from her hospitable board—which was exactly what it was, and nothing more, placed in a primitive but homely fashion across two trestles, under a verandah—I found I had considerably unaccommodated myself by all I had taken in, and felt as if I should like to sit down and have a good think over things in general before I began to move about again.

Several of the younger olive-branches of the family came round me, while I was sitting at the top of the steps smoking, and I tried to make friends with them, but they appeared to be only in a semi-domesticated state, and ran away directly I spoke to them. Then an old man came out and began to do some tinkering on the top of a post with a stone and an old tin kettle, but whether he was trying to make anything out of the stone by means of the kettle, or anything out of the kettle by means of the stone, I couldn't make out, as he seemed to use both for hammering equally. The woman took particular care to explain to me that this was not the husband she had spoken of,

which care I could quite understand at a glance. I entered into conversation with him, however, while he was near me, and when he departed elsewhere, as by that time I felt a little more locomotive, I adopted his suggestion to go for a look round while I was waiting for the conveyance. I found the country in the immediate neighbourhood of the river not very interesting, being chiefly composed of sandhills sparsely clad with a mixed vegetation of green plum-trees and castor-oil plants; which the woman told me she found very handy with such a lot of children about, equally fond of both and habitually taking them alternately.

She next told me that there were lots of fish to catch in the streamlet, and that it was very easy to catch them; on which I expressed a wish to go out and try my luck. She provided me with a bit of string with a large meat-hook on to it, and a big lump of meat on to that, and showed me where to find a boat wherein to cross to the happy fishing-grounds. I thought at first that she was mocking me as to the tackle, but she was so earnest in her asseverations that that was the kind always used in that part of the globe, and the old man turned up again and backed her on in her statements, that I was fain to content myself with supposing that either the fish must be of a prodigious size, in which case the hooking of one would be attended with some slight danger to the sportsman, or else of a lamentably innocent nature, and at any rate gifted with mouths as large as their minds, and equally able to take in any-

thing. But I refrained from expressing any doubts as to success, and shoving off, sculled over to the opposite bank, where I tied myself up to the bushes, put out my line, and waited.

When I settle down to fish I like to do it comfortably. I am very fond of going down to the bottom of our field at home, where lies a small canal—I can't say it runs, because it only moves in the direction of the wind, like the Cam—and after propping up my rod over a fallen tree, lying down on my back with a novel, and leaving my float to look after itself till I've finished my chapter, or otherwise happen to be reminded of my primary occupation. I now saw my way to passing a happy morning at the bottom of the boat; I tied the inner end of my line to the rowlock, and looked to see that the boat was so securely fastened that nothing short of Farini's whale would be able to pull it away, over to Conçepçion or anywhere; and I made myself comfortable, not with a novel, because I didn't happen to have one—I had rolled "Lothair" up again with my boots in my rug—but with the newness of the general surroundings, and a kind of sense that I wanted recouping for my night's rest; when, just as I had settled myself comfortably, as luck would have it, I heard a shout from the opposite shore, and raising my head above the gunwale, perceived a dog-cart standing near the shanty, and two men, who by their garb were clearly Englishmen, standing at the bottom of the steps, hailing to me to come back to them. I mentally ejaculated "Bother," but I considered

it might seem ungracious not to be glad to see my friends—as no doubt they were—even if they did arrive rather inopportunely; so I untied, and sculled back again, to be received in the arms of my long-sought hosts.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NAILED AND DRIVEN HOME.

I WAS driven by my two new friends in a very neat waggonette specially built for Camp use, with wheels like a young coal-cart's and springs like a locomotive's, across three leagues of undulating grass plain, the monotony of the scenery being occasionally varied by one of the wheels going bump into a *poso de toro*, the name given to the big holes a bull digs with his horns by way of expressing to another bull whom he may have chanced to meet about that he is anxious for him to come on; the effect of the bump being to telescope the unwary one up till he was not sure which was the crown of his hat and which the soles of his boots; well, we drove for three leagues, and at last we came in sight of the *quinta*.

It was a long, whitewashed, one-storied building, shaped in a right angle, with a well in the middle of what would have been the quadrangle if the other two sides had been added. In front of the house was a gigantic *ombu* tree, which is an extraordinary development of the domestic cauliflower indigenous to the camp, and which served

as a landmark to the inmates of the establishment whenever they might chance to be out on their expeditions and have lost themselves, which I afterwards found was by no means a difficult feat to perform. Around the main building there were dispersed various outbuildings, carriage-sheds, tool-houses, kitchen, offices, and the like; and the garden lay to the front and back of the house, the line of demarcation from the rest of the Camp consisting of a very old-country-looking green garden-paling. There was a drive up to the garden gate, which developed itself out of the Camp track at some twenty yards from the house, and to keep appearances up, and the cattle out, there was a gate at the end of this drive conducted on a new principle, all in a disjointed way, with hooks and eyes instead of nails, so as to swing about when any too inquisitive cow approached and touched it, and catch her a good sharp whack on the nose. I was told that this gate also puzzled the natives a good deal, and I don't much wonder, as my own experience of it afterwards was that one might consider oneself fortunate if one only pinched nine out of one's ten fingers in trying to open it, and that the best way of circumventing it, if either of the owners was about, and one didn't care to offend him by going through a gap in the paling, was to try to get over the top; when the chances were that the rail on which one had put one's foot would swing from below, and one would find oneself somehow lying on one's back on the ground on the desired side, having, I suppose, but I never could be quite

sure, as it was always done so suddenly, come through underneath. On the opposite side of the drive to the house was a large enclosure full of *alfede*, the South American substitute for hay, rather more like the undergrowth of a withy-bed than anything else; and alongside this was the *corral*, where the horses were driven up every morning to the number of twenty-five or thirty, and the ten or twelve whose turn it was to take out the family carriage, or be ridden, or go in the mowing-machine, or do anything that wanted to be done, were chosen, and the rest turned back into the camp to enjoy themselves.

Of course I didn't learn all this at once, but only by degrees during my stay in the camp; but I think it best to put it all down to start with, in order to save digressions and explanations when I may be wanting to speak of something else. The house itself was only one room thick, all the rooms being placed end to end, and the front door opening straight into the dining and sitting-room; then you walked through the dining-room out into a verandah at the back, which served as a passage to the other apartments, all of which opened straight on to that side.

When we drove up to the house the whole family was standing in a row at the gate, in a "'tention! present arms!" sort of style, to welcome me. Never having seen any of them before, and only knowing of two of them by hearsay, it was naturally a little trying for me to have to face twelve pairs of eyes, more especially when ten of them belonged to children and domestics, who

always make me uncomfortable when they fix their penetrating—or at any rate apparently so—gaze on me; the children, because you can never be sure whether you won't find yourself driven up into a corner the next minute by some embarrassing personal question, for which you are not prepared with the proper rebuff or repartee; and the servants because you so often feel that they are probably taking notes to be used afterwards for conversation about you in the servants' hall, where of course there isn't even the chance, as in the other case, of any defence against any allegations that their fancy may prompt them to make. However, I had to smile as benignantly as I could on the whole party, and was conscious that it was a complete failure; then ignored the children and domestics till I should have further leisure to tackle them as occasion required, and confined my greeting to the ladies of the house, my relation, and her husband's brother's wife.

My relation's husband's brother, whom I may as well call by his name—Dick, at once, for short, had been out for seventeen years without having ever been home once. He had married an English lady since he had settled there, and all their children had been born in the country and had never seen England, although, according to what I found the usual custom with everyone, nobody seeming to regard the country as a place where they are likely to spend their whole lives, they always spoke of England as "home." There were six children: Ethel, a girl of fourteen, who was like all girls in those parts, a great deal in

advance of what she would be in England, and helped her mother most materially in the housekeeping; young Dick, about twelve, a regular young Briton, only rather more so, game for anything, especially in the way of riding, and capable of sitting any horse, broken or unbroken, that he might chose to get upon; or even further, not only of sitting, but, I veritably believe, of standing or otherwise posing himself on it, saddled or unsaddled. Then there were Swee,—that wasn't her right name, but she was so called from a supposed resemblance to a kind of bird that frequents the camp; Terry, a sort of second edition of young Dick, though, as was natural and proper in an English family, kept in the right state of subjection by his elder brother; Minnie, a small thing, mostly skin and bone, who was considered the delicate one of the family, which she didn't approve of at all, being of quite as independent a disposition as the rest, though not always able to perform all she wanted to do; and lastly, but by no means least, Vic, the baby, a most self-asserting infant, who served to keep the entire household in a state of wholesome excitement as to what form of suicide she was going to court next.

The father and mother were most anxious to get these children home to England, though they didn't at the time I was there exactly see how they were to manage it, more especially the boys, as it is the law in the Plate region that *Porteños*, that is, those born in the country, no matter of what nationality, are liable to be taken when old enough for the conscription, whenever a war or revolution

may break out, which is a periodical contingency on the Banda Oriental side.

I wasn't sorry when, after we had got through the first formalities of introduction under difficulties —I not knowing any of them or any of them me except one by hearsay—the plan adopted therefore being that everybody took turns to introduce everybody to everybody else—my relation's husband, whose name, by the way, was Aleck, proposed that I should go and change my travelling garments, and indulge in the use of some water, which I jumped at, for in the first place I felt excessively dusty and uncomfortable, and was craving to get my fortifications off my legs; and besides, I was of opinion that it would be judicious to retire for a short time, to give the family opportunity to put their first impressions of me into order, so that we could all start fair when I rejoined them to take up my proper position in the household.

My room was at the extreme end of the verandah, and like all the others in the house, tiled floor, canvas ceiling, and whitewashed walls. There was a very comfortable-looking bed in it, which I should have liked to have experimented on at once, but company manners did not allow of it; a washing-stand, a chest of drawers, and a chair, though this last was rather shaky on its legs, and after one attempt which nearly ended fatally, I gave it up as useless for sitting purposes, and only serviceable for putting lighter articles on, such as my watch; and—oh joy!—a large saucer-bath!

* * * * * *

When I had polished myself up satisfactorily,

and unarmoured myself like the knights of old when they arrived at a strange castle and took up their quarters for a month or so, I went back to the dining room, where a meal had been prepared—what meal it was I didn't know, as my watch had stopped, and I had got into such a hopeless state of entanglement as to the time of day, that I had quite given it up as a bad job, and intended to let it run on anyhow till the others went to bed, when I should go too, and begin right again next morning. When we had finished I went round the place with Aleck and his wife, and expressed my wonder and delight at all I saw, as of course was the right thing to do on arriving at a new place; though, if the truth must be told, I was most surprised of all at the wonderful resemblance which everything at first sight bore to what it would have been at home.

I had stipulated that I was not to be treated in the least as a visitor, but exactly as one of the family, and accordingly, as soon as we had had another meal, which from the materials thereof I imagined to be afternoon tea, I was appointed to sit on a cheese-press, as a substitute for a hydraulic ram, the latest phase of the bucolic life led by the family being at that time the manufacture of cheeses by Aleck and his wife. My leg was tickling a little, and it was generally agreed that I mustn't over-exert myself any more, so a cushion was placed on the top of the press, and I took "Lothair" out to read, and I flatter myself that with the many and varied meals of which I had that day partaken, I performed my new duties very satisfactorily.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TRULY RURAL.

WE went on in the Camp in so very much the same one day as another, that the month I spent there slipped away in time, and indeed I was so happy in the consciousness of not having to be perpetually looking after that great impediment to the complete enjoyment of my travels, Myself, that I'm afraid I didn't take all the note I ought to have done of the various details of the daily programme. And a further drawback to my success in drawing up an accurate report of all the proceedings of that month is that I was infatuated enough to attempt to keep such form of diary as I did at all in shorthand, with the result that now neither I, nor I think any human being, can make either head or tail, not only of what I actually did put down, but even of the sort of ideas that I had in my head when I put it down; unless, of course, some thousands of years hence, some ingenious antiquarian of the period may chance to dig it up at the bottom of what used to be my kitchen-garden and deciphers an epic poem on the doings of Sir Gladstone, or something of that sort out of it. However, to do what I can.

The Camp is an essentially healthy place. I can strongly recommend any one who is desirous of getting pure air and as much exercise as she or he likes, unburdened by all the trammels of society and unpersecuted by letters and telegrams—the latter never arriving, and the former only once a fortnight or so—and without the necessity of wading through the newspaper every morning for fear of becoming in arrear with the times and the absolutely needful topics of conversation, to go and establish herself or himself in this delightful country, and be perfectly happy.

Except always when the North Wind blows: I had very nearly forgotten that. I remember when I first arrived that I was warned about the pecularities of the North Wind; and in my ignorance I pooh-poohed the idea of my being in the slightest degree affected by it, saying that for my part I never enjoyed any wind as much as the North Wind, as, though it was cold, it always and indeed on that very account served to brace me up and make me feel less flabby than usual; that latter condition being one of the peculiar symptoms of the ailment that I had been sent out on my travels for. My informants always used to smile in pity, but I always smiled back at them with contempt for their pity—until one day the North Wind did happen to blow. Then I found that I had miscalculated. I had forgotten that everything is conducted on an upside-down principle at the Plate, and that the North Wind comes down across the hot plains that stretch away towards the Equator, and, though perhaps it may serve to ven-

tilate them, brings down all the impurities it clears away from them on to the poor people living more south. I tried, out of very pride—or was it obstinacy? I am never quite clear in my mind as to the line of demarcation between the two: I think it depends to a great extent on the relations you bear to the person whose case you have under consideration at the time—to bear up against it for a little, but where was the use when everybody else was as sulky as could be? And indeed I found that most other people had got out of the way altogether for the time being, so I eventually followed their example and went to bed myself.

But otherwise the weather is very pleasant. At least it was while I was there. I just came in for the tail of the Pampero season, and saw positively the last of that sort of meteorological performance for the year—it was a very fair specimen, by the bye, and I got lost on the plains trying to find my way back to the house after a hurried removal caused by my incautiously venturing outside into the garden to study the general effect; search parties were instituted, and I was brought back at last in a cart after about four hours' absence—but for the most part it was quite spring-like and suitable to the time of year, from October to the middle of November. We had some extremely hot days, to be sure—I think I can make out 88° in the shade recorded in my diary about the part where I know I used habitually to put the weather report, though I won't be quite sure of it, as the page is generally smudgy all over, besides the

other difficulties—and they told me it was only about half as hot as it was usually in the summer, about January or February. But then it is a clear heat and not of a stuffy kind, and those people that find they can't stand it go indoors in the middle of the day and pull down all the blinds and shut all the windows and doors to keep the heat out, and don't venture to put a particle of themselves outside for fear of getting scorched; so if you do happen to take any hurt from it, it is only because you do not fall in properly with the customs of the country. And, indeed, when you do learn to stand it, it is astonishing how little you seem to feel it. I can't say I ever did anything of the sort myself, but I have known days when Aleck used to go out and dig most diligently at his potatoes till one would almost have thought he was trying to get warm, and it didn't seem to do him any harm. It never answers to judge of everybody else's feelings by your own; it is always best where you are trying to lay down a rule to make allowances for everybody and then strike an average.

The strict rule in the Camp is early to bed and early to rise; but for myself I must say that I was only successful in carrying out the former half of the maxim. I hope it was a sign of good health, but it used sometimes almost to alarm me to see what a prodigious appetite I evinced at that time both for my victuals and my slumber. I used to go to bed about nine and drop off to sleep before I was well into bed, and it required the whole united efforts of the male portion of the family to

get me up in the morning in time for what I regarded as my breakfast, though I have reason to believe, in spite of the tender regard for my feelings which caused the family to endeavour to conceal the fact from me, that the others had already had one, if not two meals before it. But I was speaking of the general rule; as a rule the family used to rise with the lark, or whatever the corresponding fowl is on that side of the world, and would immediately set to work at the various duties of the farm or the household, so that they were all finished at the said breakfast (?) time. My reason for making this statement is that I never succeeded in catching any of them at these duties myself, and as I do know that they didn't do them after I had gone to bed, I conclude that they must have done them before I got up.

Aleck told me all he had to do. He had to go to the *corral*, where the *capitas*, as the ancient nigger was called who would have been bailiff, I suppose, on an English estate, as there was no one over him—for the matter of that, however, he had no one definitely under him either—had already driven all the horses. He then chose his horses and turned the rest loose again, and then rode to some place previously appointed, inspected the cattle, and gave what directions were required for their disposal during the day. He and his brother had, as far as I can remember, something like two thousand head of cattle roaming about their *estancia*, which stretched for about six leagues every way. The whole *estancia* was divided off into compartments by huge lengths of wire fences,

and in each of these compartments there was what is called a *rodeo*, a large bare space, trodden completely bare of grass by the cattle, and provided with one or two stumps on which salt is placed to make it attractive to the bovine mind and accustom it to make its place of assembly there. In time the herds came to look on these places as a sort of "home,"—to borrow an expression from children's games,—for them to run to when they are alarmed in any way. Every herd has its particular *rodeo*, and the etiquette is very strict; if any beast happens to get into the wrong *rodeo* it is soon shown the way out, and it may congratulate itself if it can escape by it when it has been so shown. When the cattle have all been driven up together they are counted, and it is settled which are to be killed, or sold, or otherwise done something or nothing to, and then I believe the main part of the day's work is over.

Aleck promised to take me to see this performance some morning, but there were always difficulties in the way in consequence of my being unable to ride because of my groggy leg, and as it is always attended with risk to venture among the cattle in any other way than on horseback, I was permitted to slumber on till nature considered I had done enough that way. But I know all this is true, because I often saw the *rodeos* when I was out driving in the afternoon, and the stumps were there.

After breakfast came the more ornamental part of the day. I don't mean to say that anybody was ever idle, but by ornamental I wish to express

those duties that were not absolutely necessary, but served to add to the general comfort of the establishment. I took my share in this department by working in the carpenter's shop at the other end of the house to my room. The Camp name for carpenter's shop is something like *tombola*, I think; but I can't say exactly, as I never was good at remembering foreign names for things, which rather places one at a disadvantage in speaking a language; though I am better at the verbs, especially the irregular ones. I can make a verb so irregular that not even the most exacting of grammar-writers could find anything to grumble at in it.

But I am digressing again. I spent a great deal of my time at carpentering, and by the time I left I had become tolerably efficient in the use of my tools. That is to say, I could turn out little things that would have done credit to Robinson Crusoe, though perhaps they would not have entitled me to any reward at a Mechanics' Institute. I mended the chairs and tables, and Vic's wheelbarrow, though the latter performance was hardly as successful as it might have been, first owing to the vehicle being rendered somewhat dangerous for use on account of the nails persisting in appearing through the wood in all sorts of unexpected places, and secondly because Vic would insist on trying to give Terry rides in it, when the contortions consequent on the nails proving more than the glue would bear, the result was a complete collapse. I made two boot-jacks on a new principle—for which I intend to take

out a patent when I have time, and if I don't find, as I have invariably done hitherto whenever I have made some brilliant discovery in mechanics, or invented a new joke, that someone has hit on exactly the same idea only last week—and a pipe-rack for the elder Dick, which I painted bright green, and which looked rather like a washing-stand; but my *chef-d'œuvre* was a *gaucho* pipe. I called it a *gaucho* pipe because it was manufactured in the parts where *gauchos* live, but beyond that I had no particular authority for doing so. I never saw another pipe like it, and I don't think I ever shall. I fancy I shouldn't ever make my fortune by pipes; I took over a week at that one, and when it was finished it would have been rather dear at a penny. I constructed it out of a hard wood that grew on the *estancia*—name unknown, or at any rate forgotten at present—and my tools were an axe, a saw, and a centre-bit. I made it on the same system as the Irishman made his cannon, by first boring a hole and then putting the wood round it. I have brought it home with me, and have been trying to palm it off ever since on various local museums in which I am interested; but somebody always turns up just in time to discredit my stories about it, and I have it still on my hands.

The cheese-making also progressed very satisfactorily, and we turned out two articles that looked very tempting; until we came to eat them, and then they vividly recalled to my mind the old days when I used to chaw indiarubber to while away the tedium of school hours. We lunched

off one of them one day, and the dreams that we all suffered from that night would have served to stock Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors for a year. However, we didn't despair, and if it hadn't been that other things turned up for us to occupy ourselves in experimenting on, I haven't a doubt that by the time I came away I should have been competent to give even the Cheshire manufacturers some of those hints that I understand are always the most useful in the development of anything, viz., those picked up under the guidance of Necessity.

CHAPTER XXX.

CAMP IDYLLINGS.

WE usually spent the afternoons making expeditions of a picnic character to some portion or other of the *estancia*. The extent of it being so many leagues every way, there was as much room for this sort of amusement as there would be in an average-sized English county. I am glad to say that these expeditions were not got up purely for my benefit. If there is one thing that I don't like when I am staying about, it is the feeling that my hosts are trying to amuse me; it reflects in a kind of way on my own want of resource, not to speak of its very often interfering with some private plan of my own. But these were a regular part of the family day, and the children always looked forward to them; besides, as the whole of the household took part in them, if I hadn't joined in too, all the responsibility of looking after the *quinta* would have devolved upon me, which I wasn't prepared to undertake. We always went *en grande famille*, taking the waggonette and the waggon, in the former of which Aleck drove his wife, and in the latter Dick his—the grammar of that last clause is a little crude,

but I don't see how I can improve upon it, and a little attention will extricate the meaning—Vic, the provisions, cooking utensils, cushions, shawls, rugs, &c., being distributed equally between the two vehicles; and the other children, the cook-boy, the housemaid, and the general man followed on their respective horses, the whole turn-out strongly recalling the idea of one of the old patriarchal families removing. I was particularly edified by the idea of the housemaid possessing a horse: it was a contingency that I should never have imagined could exist outside Ollendorff.

Before my arrival, it had been supposed that, being young, and consequently proportionately active, I would ride like the rest of the junior members of the party, and a horse had been told off for me. But then, my unlucky accident had occurred, and though I knew I thereby incurred the not too carefully disguised contempt of young Dick and Terry, I was unable to avail myself of him, and had to take a seat in one of the conveyances along with the other paraphernalia instead. I tried going in the waggon with Dick and his wife at first, for the sake of appearance, because it was rougher and seemed more like the wild life that one expected in the Camp; but after one or two tries I came to the conclusion that it was scarcely worth while unsettling the whole of my interior arrangements for life just for the sake of being able to say afterwards that I always drove about in nothing more advanced than a country waggon when I was in the Camp, and habitually took my seat in the waggonette, which certainly

jolted a good deal too, but, having better springs, not nearly so badly as the waggon.

I may as well mention here that although I was incapable of making actual use of my horse in the way that one usually does, yet I made a point of making great friends with him with a view to studying the attributes of a quadruped about which I had heard and read so much, viz., the Noble Steed of the Pampas. I was very proud of possessing one of these all to myself, though I must say he didn't at all come up to my expectations as far as looks went. He was a very fair average specimen, however, I was told, of what all Camp horses really are. The fact is, that the N. S. of the P. is one of those things that travellers go out and see—the Southern Cross is another—and then come back and add such an enormous percentage to when they describe them: it is a great shame on the creature himself, because I'm sure nobody likes to be described inaccurately.

Alfonso—that is what I called my horse—was an insignificant-looking little animal, standing about fourteen hands high. He was very, very wiry—indeed, the wires stood out so clearly, and the integument between was so tightly stretched, that if you were standing on one side of him and somebody else was standing on the other, you could make out a dim outline of the other person through him. He never looked very happy either; there was always an expression in his eyes as if he was conscious that he was intended purely for use and not for ornament, and was

wondering what he would be employed on next. I certainly never caught him throwing up his arching neck to snuff the passing breeze, and as for doing anything so frivolous as snorting in his joy, I am sure the idea never entered his mind. When he stood still and you went and took a fore and aft look at him, he reminded you of a sawing-stool viewed from the same aspect, and if you studied him from broadside on, he suggested the idea of one of those toys you screw on to a table, with the head and tail hanging down till you pull them up simultaneously with a jerk by means of a string. Taking him all in all, I should say that if he had been imported into a London cab, it would be exceedingly probable that some energetic member of the S.P.C.A. would have had the proprietor of that cab up for driving an animal unfit for work.

But in spite of his looks, the Camp horse is certainly a good one to go. His habitual state is endurance—I don't suppose he has ever known what comfort is—so that though there is nothing extra to show about him, what there is of him is all tested up to the highest standard, and can be thoroughly depended on. He is not particular about his feeding—corn he is absolutely ignorant of, and he usually lives on grass and thistles—and he is so often wet through that the race has long since given up catching cold as being too monotonous. The Camp horse never trots on a journey; his natural pace is a gentle sort of amble at about eight miles an hour, and he will keep this up from daybreak till nightfall, and then just take a snack

off a thistle and lie down alongside his master, and be ready to go on just the same for the whole of the next day. Aleck has told me that he once rode Alfonso's father all the way from the *estancia* to Monte Video and back, a distance of something over a thousand miles, without breaking the journey once except for the nights' rests.

I'm afraid my conduct towards Alfonso rather tended to pamper him, and if he hadn't been the best of horses, he might in time have become corrupted. But I hadn't the time to let long friendship work its course, and I had to employ other means to hurry on our good feelings towards each other. I made a habit of going and visiting him in the *corral* every morning—he was always brought in, because I was always sanguine enough to believe every night that next morning I *must* be able to ride—taking him bits of bread and at first handfuls of Camp sugar—but I gave that latter up soon, because, it being soft, he never succeeded in taking it in without swallowing most of my arm as well—and I used to say "*Manana*" and "*Quien Sabe*" and "*O. K.*"—which last answers in Spanish, I believe, to our "All right," said petulantly—those being the most important Spanish words that I had mastered since I had been in the country; and before I came away we had almost got to understand each other, and I am sure if I had stopped there a little longer we should have got to love each other and be to each other as the Arab to his steed. He quite learnt his name, I know, because directly he heard it he always started off on an amble in the opposite direction, unless I

happened to have a very conspicuous quantity of bread in my hand.

It naturally couldn't be expected that Alfonso was to be allowed to remain idle, just because his temporary master happened not to be able to ride him, so he very often came with us on our expeditions as one of the draught-horses. He was a steady-going horse in harness, and was particularly sharp at detecting the *posos de toros*, which are very often rather hard to see when they have been all grown over with thistles, so that I enjoyed sitting behind him more than behind some of his younger *corral* companions.

There were three principal points where we used to go and picnic, lying in three different directions from the *quinta*, one on each of the three water boundaries of the *estancia*. Dick and Aleck's *estancia* was particularly blessed in the matter of water surroundings; it had the Uruguay, which even as high up as that in its course was as wide as the Thames at the Nore, on one side, the Arroyo de Negro, which I have already mentioned, on a second, and a smaller stream still, of about the size of the Cam, which from its size they didn't think worthy of receiving a name, on the third. The fourth side was parted off from the neighbouring *estancia* by a wire fence, and as there is nothing particularly exciting in picnicking under the shelter of a wire fence, that side was not such a favourite as the others with the children.

We generally left the *quinta* about one o'clock, arriving at our destination after a drive of an hour or so, according to the spot which was our object

on that particular day. The place selected on the Uruguay side of the *estancia* went by the name of the Barranca, and was the top of a high cliff rising straight out of the river, about sixty feet high and three-quarters of a mile long. It was a remarkably fine cliff, and reminded one as far as it went of some of the finest bits of the Isle of Wight coast. It sloped down to a marsh at one end, which was all overgrown with brushwood, and was reputed to be the occasional haunt of pumas —though I don't think any one had ever actually seen one—and at the other to a rocky beach with large boulders lying about it, looking as if the cliff had once extended further, and one day all came down with a run. The chief attraction to the Barranca was the passing of the Buenos Ayres steamer on its way up or down the river, an event which took place about three times a fortnight; it doesn't seem much to become excited about, but it served as a break in the general sameness of our existence, and besides that as a kind of connection with the outer world when the establishment may have been for weeks without seeing a single visitor. When the momentary agitation caused by the sight of the steamer had subsided we generally spent a couple of hours reclining on the top of the cliff enjoying the breeze. I have passed several happy afternoons lying on my back on a rug, looking up at the light faintly struggling through my open umbrella, and trying to realize how Tennyson's Lotos-Eaters must have felt under similar circumstances.

Or we would wander away in the direction of

the interior, and pick Camp flowers, and try to distinguish between the birds and the butterflies, which is by no means an easy thing to do, as it is often very questionable where the ones leave off and the others begin. Or we would go owl-hunting, which is done by waiting till you see an owl sitting on the top of his hole, and then walking round and round him till he has twisted his neck in trying to follow you with his eye; because it never occurs to him to move his body or to occasionally turn his head back again, but he goes on winding his jugular artery round and round till he at last drops down dead from suffocation. I can't say I ever saw this myself, because the owls always dived into their holes directly I came within what I suppose they considered a dangerous distance of them. Or very frequently we would have to go out in all directions in search of the irrepressible Vic, who would have disappeared, some of the party insisting on it that she had wandered to the edge of the cliff and tumbled over, and others that she was at the moment probably wallowing in the marsh, vainly endeavouring to escape the jaws of some hypothetical puma. She always turned up safe, however, and was first scolded and then hugged all round, and strictly forbidden to go out of her mother's sight, an injunction which she generally obeyed till the spirit moved her and opportunity was afforded her of making a start in a new direction.

And then the fire would be lighted and the meal prepared by the cook and the housemaid, and, of course, the children; a regular Camp meal,

cherasco—with all due apologies for the spelling to those who know better—that is, great lumps of meat cut off like beefsteaks and toasted on the ends of pointed sticks over the fire, and roast potatoes, washed down with tea and Camp biscuit. One would have thought, however, that a constant habit of picnics would have taught some experience, but it hadn't, and we invariably forgot the salt. And then we used to bundle everything back into the carriages again, and hurry home before the darkness should come down in a lump and benight us in the middle of the Camp.

The other two places we chiefly patronized were called Humbug Hole and Fox's Hole, one on each of the other streams respectively—origin of either name unascertainable; we went to these places for purposes of fishing. It was a very simple variety of the gentle sport that we went in for; there was no skill required for fly-throwing or anything of that sort. Our tackle was all of that description that had so surprised me when I had first landed on the camp, young shark-hooks tied on to good stout bits of string; we just had to bait them with bits of raw meat and drop them in, and the fish would come out as fast as we liked to pull them. There were one or two different kinds of finny monsters prevalent, but as I didn't know then that I was ever going to write this book, I didn't pay any very particular attention to their names. One was something like an enlarged tadpole, all head, with a long, slender tail out behind—it barked, like Mr. Briggs' fish when taken out of the water, and I think it was called a

baggaray; and another was like a perch, with long spikes stretched out from his gills, which were uncommonly unpleasant if you got them stuck into you, as they stung considerably worse than hedge-nettles. Occasionally one of us would get a tremendous bite, and the combined resources of the whole of the family would be called in to help her or him, and after a tremendous struggle an old turtle would appear at the surface. We never killed them, but always took them to a point higher up the stream, and released them, when they would walk quietly down into the water again as if nothing had happened. Indeed, I believe some wily old specimens used to get their meals this way, and as soon as they had been let go, run round underneath and take another bite; because very often there was certainly a very strong family resemblance between the three or four that we averaged in the course of the afternoon's fishing, and the intervals between their capture were usually pretty regular.

The flies and mosquitoes down by the fishing-places were something too awful to contemplate, but we got so used to them as the regular thing that I had very nearly forgotten them now altogether. We only had to keep still for a few seconds, and we had all disappeared from human ken, nothing remaining to be seen where we had been sitting but huge masses of flies, in outline something like the persons whose respective places they were occupying, but otherwise almost unrecognizable. There was nothing to be done against them; it was of no use trying to brush

them off, because that only made room for less satiated flies, and it was of no use lighting a fire of green wood and sitting in the lee of it, because the flies seemed to enjoy green smoke, and we certainly didn't. All we succeeded in doing, I think, was at last in reducing our bad language to a minimum.

We once heard a loud splash in the water round a bend in the river from where we were sitting at Humbug Hole, and it was either Dick or Aleck, I forget which, said it was a Capybara. We did not see it, however, and I only record it as the nearest approach I had to seeing a really genuine South American animal, I mean one that isn't indigenous anywhere else—never performs, so to speak, out of South America. There were armadillos about, too; Aleck showed me their marks on the *rodeos* very often when we were returning from our drives; but I never really saw or even heard one, as they only appear on moonlight nights, and I never could find any of the family with sufficient enterprise to accompany me on a four-mile walk to the nearest *rodeo* on the chance of meeting an armadillo. For a full description of the Capybara, which I all but saw, I must refer the reader to any good Natural History.

I was out there in the close season, unfortunately, so that I didn't get any what might be called genuine shooting, 'though I did a good deal in the Hurlingham fashion; that is in the dove line, combining amusement with usefulness by superintending the safety of the peas. It could hardly be called sport; it mainly consisted of wait-

ing till a covey of forty or fifty doves had settled, and then firing in their direction, just as much to scare them as anything else—because I have a very tender heart; but one might just as well have tried to fire towards a haystack and not hit it, so it wasn't exactly my fault if some of them were bound to get knocked over, sometimes to the number of twelve or fifteen at a time. It always struck me as very much like wholesale butchery, but when one is in the Banda Oriental one must do as the Banda Orientalists do; and I suppose peas must be protected somehow; and dove-tart was certainly not a bad change from the perpetual beef and mutton that we had chiefly to depend upon. And after all, it wasn't very much worse than what occurs in the shooting-season on a good many English estates.

There was a considerable scare, which lasted for some eight or ten days whilst I was staying on the *estancia*, about some news which arrived through a neighbouring *saladero*, that a certain Pedro, a gentleman of native extraction, had taken offence at something some English settler had said to him, and had first shot him down, and then started off on a general crusade against any other English men or women that he might chance to find about, declaring his intention of wiping the whole of them off the face of that portion of the globe—if one can properly speak of wiping off with a gun. I don't know for certain what the particular offence given was, but I rather think that the Englishman had called Pedro a *gaucho*. Now we spoke of *gauchos* in a very free and easy manner amongst ourselves,

and I daresay there can be little doubt that Signor Pedro was one of that class that we wished to denominate by the term; but I believe that it is not more the habit there to call a man a *gaucho* to his face, any more than in England we should address one of the mobocracy as a cad; so naturally Pedro had resented it. But, however that may have been, we were all put upon the alert, and strict orders were issued to the ladies and children of our community that they were on no account to go out of sight of the house by themselves, while we males armed ourselves to the teeth with revolvers and *gaucho* knives, and every other instrument we could think of, and expended a vast deal of ammunition in riddling—or attempting to riddle, as the case might be—the *ombu* in front of the house.

My own practice was after the first two or three times voted rather dangerous—it wasn't my fault, but I dissected my revolver to clean it, and when I had put it together again, I couldn't get it to shoot straight anyhow, and it took some little time to study the proper angle to allow for it—so I was delegated to a swamp that lay some three or four hundred yards from the *quinta* and left in a punt to bang away to my heart's content, without any risk of hurting anybody. I first tried aiming at a bird of the flamingo type with a tail that looked as if it belonged to somebody else, which had set up its establishment on the opposite side of the marsh, but when I had practised at him—or her, whichever it was—for two days without producing the slightest effect on its imperturbability, I resorted to shooting at a paper target at

a rather less distance. I was more successful at that, and one day I was enabled to carry in my target with no less than thirty-five holes through, to show in triumph to the family. Only it chanced that little Dick and Terry, who took the keenest interest in all my proceedings in the sporting line, had been safely ensconced somewhere near behind a tree and had been counting the reports, and they declared they only had heard twenty-eight. There are occasions when one feels one would like to box some children's ears.

By the time, however, that I had arrived at a reasonable state of perfection, and had also expended the whole of my stock of bullets, the scare had abated, and things resumed their normal state.

Dick and Terry undertook to instruct me in the art of lassoing, which was a thing I thought I owed it to my relations to take home. Lassoing looks very easy, and it is so really, provided you can prevent the cord either catching in the wrong thing as you wind it round and round preparatory to throwing it, or else knocking your own hat off. There are two different kinds of throws; one overhand, whose object is to throw the noose over the neck of the animal you are going to capture, and the other underhand, when you try to put it round his hind legs; but of course it wants practice, and when my throw was done, if I had wished to execute the former manœuvre, I as a rule found the noose round my own hind legs, and round my own neck if I had attempted the latter. There is something of the boomerang nature in a lasso; it always returns to the owner if it doesn't strike its

mark, and with me it generally didn't. I went most conscientiously through the whole course of twelve lessons as described in books about young Indians of the Pampas learning to lasso. I began on a post, and then advanced to the poultry running around the house, and then finished on Dick and Terry, who did duty as wild bulls, or ostriches, or whatever wild beast we liked to imagine, with the greatest nonchalance, never seeming to think for a moment of the possible risk they ran of getting strangled, supposing I had thrown the noose over their heads and it had pulled them up in their headlong career past me with a jerk.

Aleck took me out one day in the waggonette to a sort of paddock that had been made in the middle of the camp for those sort of purposes, to see some real lassoing. The animal to be lassoed was a young bull that wanted branding. He had been singled out on the *rodeo* that morning, and was quietly cropping the *alfede* in the middle of the paddock, apparently unaware that anything was going to happen to him; perhaps, if anything, rather thinking how jolly it was to have a nice big place like this, full of very superior sort of food to that which he found on the camp, all to himself. With us had come the black *capitas*, Joseph Maria—surname unknown—and his son, on horseback, with their lassos coiled round the pommels of their saddles. The *gaucho* saddle, by the way, is not at all like an ordinary saddle. It must be remembered that it very often has to serve its owner as a bed, and, in fact, its component parts appear to be nothing more or less than those of a

bed, carefully rolled up and piled one over the other on the horse's back, the head of the bedstead being atop of all, and the whole strapped down with a broad girth.

But to return to our lassoing. Joseph Maria and his son rode into the paddock, and Aleck and I carefully shut and barred the gate after them, and then took up our position behind two of the biggest of the posts that criss-cross fashion surrounded the enclosure. Joseph then rode towards the bull, having uncoiled his lasso to about half its length, and holding it in bights in his right hand, with the noose trailing alongside of his horse on the ground. Presently the bull looked up. Joseph whirled the noose two or three times round over his head—his own, I mean—and then letting the bights go, dropped it cleverly over the bull's horns. Then turning his horse's head in the opposite direction he galloped away till the noose ran up tight. The bull not being used to this sort of thing, no sooner felt it than he began to pursue Joseph Maria, and a most exciting race ensued, the bull's object being to obtain reparation for the insult thus put upon him, or at any rate to demand an explanation, and Joseph Maria's to allow him to do nothing of the sort, but to keep the lasso as taut as possible. Round the paddock they went twice, Joseph's horse being perfectly trained to the work, and adapting his pace exactly as required, and meanwhile the son hovered in the rear, whirling his lasso with a slightly different motion, and at last, when the opportunity came, jerking it up under

and round the hind legs of the bull. The noose ran up with a jerk at that end, and down went the outmanœuvred animal on to his nose. The two horses were now standing still at the two extreme ends of the lassos, with the bull midway between, powerless. Joseph Maria and his son left their horses, and approaching the bull with their branding instruments, which had been heating all this time in a corner of the field, inflicted the necessary mark on his flank, regardless of his protestations. He tried very hard to get up, but the two lengths of lasso were as tight as bowstrings, with the other ends fastened to the saddles on the horses, who being quite practised in the business, never budged an inch, but might have been two posts for the time being.

Then came the ticklish part of the performance. Joseph went back to his horse, and mounted, ready to start at a moment's notice; the son jerked his noose from round the bull's hind legs, and then ran as hard as he could to his horse. No sooner had the bull realized that he could get up than he did so; and then, after pausing for a moment to consider which of his tormentors he should go for, he decided on Joseph Maria, being perhaps slightly prejudiced in his favour by the fact that Joseph's noose was still troubling him about the head. Away they went again, Joseph letting the lasso get a little slack now, and giving it occasional little jerks, until he had jerked it altogether free of the bull's horns; then he and his son both made tracks as hard as they could for the gate, where they arrived just in time to get

it open and get round the corner; whilst the bull, who came charging madly after them, as soon as he found himself out in the open Camp again, seemed to have changed his mind as to taking his revenge on them, and went on headlong towards the *rodeo*, no doubt to court the pleasures of the sympathy of the rest of the herd.

Joseph Maria was a most intelligent and agreeable man. I unfortunately never got further in conversation with him than wishing him "*Buen Dias*" every morning when I met him—I think we were mutually a little shy of each other—but he took a deep interest in me from a distance, and I regard it as entirely owing to him that I was finally set on my legs again; it is true that it was only just in time for me to be starting home again, but still I am not the less grateful. Aleck came in one day with a huge bundle of wild celery, which he said Joseph Maria had sent me with his love as an infallible cure for cases of my sort—to be applied both externally and internally. The celery was to be boiled to a mash and applied as a poultice to the place, and the water strained off and drunk by the patient. I had had so much of skilled appliances without seeming to be any the better for it, that I thought there could be no harm in trying some of these quack remedies, the more especially as Aleck told me that these Camp people never saw a doctor in their lives, and had nothing to depend on but these native prescriptions when they were gored by a bull or otherwise damaged, and that consequently the mortality through accidents in the Camp was very small. I

must say that I abandoned the decoction after one or two doses, because it was so exceedingly nasty that I preferred the chances of the ailment lasting a little longer to the remedy; but I kept rigidly to the poultice system, and I hadn't been three days at it when a marked change in my condition set in. I will so far compensate for the natural expression of my feelings towards doctors as a race by recommending to their notice the excellent healing properties of wild celery. I could walk about with real comfort before the end of a week, and if I had only been able to stop in the camp another fortnight I should have been careering about outside Alfonso.

Perhaps as efficient a sign of how much progress I made was the fact that I was at last enabled to put on my Wellington boots. I daresay it seems rather pusillanimous, but it certainly was rather aggravating to have brought out a pair of Wellington boots, which were always getting in the way, and taking up an unreasonable amount of room in one's portmanteau, and then not to be able to wear them in the Camp of all places, where everybody but myself, even down to Vic, was wearing long boots of some description or other. But the day came when I was able to put them on. It took a good deal of time and trouble to do so, requiring the whole efforts of myself and young Dick and Terry, and the general man, who, though from his appearance I should never have thought it, had once been in the 17th Lancers, and professed to understand all about long boots. And once I had got them on, I felt

I was in them for life; indeed, my sole reason for taking to the manufacture of the boot-jacks, as I have already mentioned, was in order to get them off again. But I felt three times the man I was before while I was equipped in them, and game for anything.

I think I have stated before that the weather came on much hotter as my visit drew to its close. My room being next to the kitchen, began to assume the temperature of a hothouse, and then to finish up with, one night there came a violent storm of rain, most of which collected itself in the canvas ceiling till it lowered down overhead on me like a birdseye view of a hammock taken from underneath, and then burst and all came down with a run, necessitating my rising hurriedly in search of an umbrella, under whose shelter I camped out for the night. A family conclave was called next day, and it was settled that for the rest of my sojourn I should shake down on a *cattaray*—that is, a common trestle in frequent use among she dwellers in the Camp—in Aleck's parlour, removing in the morning to my old quarters for toilette purposes. It was certainly about time, as what with the heat of the weather and the kitchen chimney combined, I was slowly becoming cremated. The curious fact of it was that I got perfectly chapped all over with the heat. Perhaps it was the force of insular habit that I must get chapped at that time of the year.

In Aleck's room I had a more comfortable time of it, except for the mosquitoes; but I found a way of circumventing them, namely, by rigging up

an extempore net, and then putting a candle and book inside, to make them think I was going to get in, and leaving a small aperture to admit them. Then I used to sit outside in my shirt and slippers till they had pretty well all gathered inside waiting for me, and get them all together at one fell swoop.

Aleck used to come and sit smoking with me till he turned in, and regale me with yarns of his experiences when he first went out there, and the revolutionary movements were more spread over the interior than they are now. In the old time it does not seem to have been so pleasant for the peaceful settler, who, perhaps having lived for some weeks in blissful ignorance of what was going on in the outside world, might be one morning awakened to the unpleasant consciousness that something was stirring in the revolution way, by the unwelcome appearance of a band of armed men who alighted at his door and demanded food and a change of raiment and horses all round; and when they had got what they wanted, cleared out just in time to avoid a second band of Blancos or Colorados—whichever the first party hadn't been—who were on the march in pursuit of them, and halted at the said peaceful settler's door for similar purposes. It is true that each party invariably professed to be the one and only legitimate representative of the Government for the time being, and promised faithfully that all requisitions should be repaid by the grateful state when the troubles were over. But it never mattered much to the P. S. which side eventually got

the best of it, for the only method adopted for restoring the borrowed horses was turning them loose wherever they might happen to be when there was no further use for them, and letting them find their owners, or their owners find them or not, as they could.

But the wire fences have had a great deal to do with the revolutions becoming more confined to the immediate neighbourhood of the towns; wire fences are less romantic than the old *régime* of far-stretching unimpeded Pampas, but they are more satisfactory to the owners. The revolutionists cannot understand them, and the triumphant career of many a hitherto victorious army has been checked by its suddenly being brought up short by a wire fence. I suppose there is something uncanny about it in their eyes; they never attempt to jump it, and if it is made of good stout British stuff it baffles all their endeavours to cut or otherwise break through it, so that they may have to go miles round to get at their enemies, of whom they can get a view gesticulating defiance at them from the other side.

All the visitors, however, that we had when I was there were of a more peaceful description. The *estancia* was situated just about half-way between Paysandu and Fray Bentos, the Potted Ox-tongue and Liebig's Extract headquarters respectively, and this being about the beginning of the season for buying up stock to supply the manufactory, the *troperos*, or dealers in cattle, began to make their annual tours round the *estancias*, to select and take away what they thought suitable for their purposes,

and occasionally one would drop in on us. They were all of the same type; hard, weather-beaten men, dressed in entire suits of some alpaca-like looking stuff, fastened tight round their necks and waists, and then bulging out loosely everywhere else, except where the lower extremities of their inexpressibles were gathered into their boots, which gave them an appearance very much like a badly done up gingham umbrella, their slouch hat representing the handle. The first two that came were put up in the house, and came to supper with us, and Aleck and Dick took turns to talk to them, each going on for a spell while the other primed himself with some more conversation to keep the thing going; but their education was distinctly defective in the manners department, and the ladies objected so strongly to their behaviour at table, that all further ones were packed off to be entertained by Joseph Maria in his hut after their own fashion; and I daresay they were more happy there themselves, sitting on their haunches, *gaucho* fashion, eating *cherasco* with their fingers and passing round the *matté* pot. None of them ever stayed more than one night; they were out purely on business, and I don't think we could have persuaded them to stop had we been ever so anxious. And in the mornings when I got up, Aleck used to come to me and tell me with a sigh of relief that he had taken the last night's visitor down to the *rodeo*, and made his bargain with him, sometimes good, sometimes bad, and then sent him on his way rejoicing.

Bathing began about a week before I left. Aleck

took me down to a place near the Barranca for a last treat on my last day; we had some difficulty getting to it, as the last mile or so required some rather careful navigation through certain quicksands that had been left by the retirement of the river after the floods, and we very nearly got swallowed up once or twice; but we arrived at last at the edge of the dark waters of the Uruguay, and I threw off my clothes and plunged in head over ears, and struck out in such a glorious swim! It wasn't till I came out again, rejoicing to find that my long inactivity had at any rate not made me forget that art, that I understood that what Aleck had been shouting at me as I splashed about was the cheerful information that there were occasional alligators about. But none appeared on that occasion, so no one was any the worse.

Aleck also explained to me what had often puzzled me: first, why the water of the Uruguay looked so dirty; and, secondly, why everybody who lives near it is so fond of drinking it. The whole river is strongly impregnated with sarsaparilla, which is brought down from the woods miles and miles up higher, and the water is supposed to possess endless blood-purifying virtues.

* * * * *

And now came the day of my departure. The ladies all combined to pack my things, even down to Vic, who very nearly ended by being shut up in one of my portmanteaus. Everybody pressed something on me to take away as a souvenir, but I knew from experience by this time what that involved; besides being aware that if I really wanted

anything characteristic of the country I could get much more remarkable specimens in Ratcliffe Highway, or in those parts where sailor men do mostly congregate; so the only thing I would take was an ostrich-egg, which I was told would keep for six months, and would do to make a family omelette with for Christmas. This I rolled up safely in my rugs, intending to put it into one of my portmanteaus when I repacked to go on board the steamer.

The ex-lancer brought round the waggonette, and touched his hat to me as I got in—the only time I had ever seen him do it to any one, even his masters; masters and servants are all equal out there; but I suppose the fact of my going back to England recalled old habits to his mind. I shook hands all round; Aleck drove me to the landing-place, where the *saladero* man was ready to take me off to the steamer as she passed. On board—and as we steamed by the Barranca, I saw the whole family standing in a row waving adieux to me, Vic being forcibly held back by her dress by her mamma to prevent her from compassing an untimely death over the edge, and that was the last I saw of the *estancia*.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

MOST SATISFACTORY FOR ALL PARTIES.

I ONLY just had time to go round and bid good-bye to such of the acquaintances that I had picked up in the course of my travels who were residing in Buenos Ayres, and at last the day came on which I was to leave for home.

I packed up with an avidity that I had never felt before, and for once succeeded at the first attempt in getting everything neatly balanced at the top of everything else, though of course the heaps stood high above the edges of the portmanteaus themselves, ready to be squeezed down. I put the ostrich-egg, rolled up carefully in my mackintosh, into the middle of the stratum of clothes in my largest portmanteau that would about answer to the secondary period in a geological chart; and then I got to work in a corner, with my feet against one wall and the portmanteau up edgeways against the other, and slowly but surely got the straps to buckle at the first hole. Then there came an explosion as of an eighty-one ton gun. I let the portmanteau fly open again, and looked in the place whence I knew the report must have come. It is a fallacy

to believe that ostrich-eggs will keep for six months.

All the lower classes of the populace appeared to have come out to see me off from the Mole next morning, and all of them seemed to expect some remuneration for having done so. However, I got off with an expenditure of something under a ten-pound note, and after an uneventful voyage on the tender, arrived at the side of the *Tagus*. I was quite affected by the sight of her; she seemed like the first real step towards that haven of rest for which I had long since been inwardly craving. There were the same old officers, the same old doctor—I don't mean to say they were actually stricken in years, but they were the same old things—the same old stewards standing in a line at the top of the ladder to receive me and my two fellow-passengers, and when I went below I chose my same old cabin with its inconveniences of its neighbourhood to the scullery and all. I arranged my things in exactly the same old places, and went on deck to wait for the ship's starting.

"Ting! ting!!" went the bell again, and my heart leapt at the glad sound. I rushed to the engines to watch them make their first revolution in a homeward direction. "Ting! ting!! ting!!!" Up and down went the piston-rods, round went the cranks, and I felt as if I could have screamed with delight; all my cares were over, and I was now well started on my way to the bosom of my family. However, I didn't scream, because the chief officer was standing on the other side of the engines, and I thought he might think it odd.

The other two passengers were a young lady, who didn't appear for the first two or three days, and a Frenchman, and we made up a very select little party at dinner, comprising the chief officer, the doctor, the chief engineer, the Frenchman, and myself; all sitting at one table, though the stewards, who were seemingly creatures of habit, had laid covers all down the saloon, and wanted the officers to preside in solitary grandeur as usual at their respective tables. After the first two or three days, however, they awoke to the fact of its scarcely being necessary for the whole of them to stand about doing nothing during meals, so they gradually disappeared, only telling off a sufficient contingent of about twenty-five per meal for each one to hand a separate dish.

We stopped the whole of next day at Monte Video, and I went on shore for a few hours, just to say I had been there, as my original plan having been to go to Monte Video, it would have seemed rather as if I had failed in my duty if I hadn't even so much as set my foot in the place. I went in company with the Frenchman, who professed to know the town by heart, but he proved to be a fraud, and we lost ourselves most effectually, and after having tumbled upon the Matrice Cathedral by accident, and being nearly shut in there for good after the service was over, we spent most of the rest of our time mistaking our way back to the quay in trams, with the exception of a short time which we devoted to breakfast.

Monte Video looks—though, of course, with the very cursory view I had of it, I don't like to com-

mit myself as far as to say that it really is—a finer town than Buenos Ayres. The streets are wider, and there are more open spaces, where it is possible to breathe freely. But it didn't strike me as having much life in it; perhaps I might have been there at the wrong time, but the inhabitants didn't seem to be rushing about like the Buenos Ayreans, keenly intent on doing nothing but make money—indeed they looked as if they were rather more anxious to do the nothing and leave the money alone.

We didn't take in any more passengers at Monte Video, and as by the time we had got out into the open sea my French friend had entirely collapsed, I found it incumbent on me to do duty for the whole complement of the saloon. I did my best; I fancy now that I must have made myself rather obtrusive in my efforts to supply the want; the whole of my time was taken up in trying to show the crew that though there was only one available saloon passenger, he could contrive to take up a good lot of room. One thing I know I succeeded in perfectly, and that was in getting considerably in everybody's way. While I was in the camp, Aleck had spent some of his spare time in making me a deck-chair after the pattern of the American hammock-seat,—and it was very well made, with the exception that it had a tendency to jam one's fingers when one shut it up, if one hadn't previously studied it and taken accurate note of its peculiarities,—but for want of the neighbourhood of an ironmonger's shop he had been compelled to knock an old cart to pieces,

and take the iron bolts and nuts requisite for the folding-up parts out of that. These answered the purpose very well, but were rather ponderous, and it was for some time a mystery on board why on those days that I chose to take the air reclining on deck with "Lothair" in my lap, the ship always went several points out of her course. At last one of the quartermasters made a suggestion to the captain, and I received orders to locate myself and my chair as far as possible from the binnacle, with the immediate result that there were no further deviations in the voyage.

I am proud to say, however, that I was indirectly through this same chair the means of administering what I hope may be a wholesome lesson to the custom-house officers of those countries as to the propriety of making use of other people's possessions. The canvas of the seat was not nailed on as in the ordinary way, but turned over at the ends to admit battens which slid through sockets in the main frames, so that the battens could be taken out, leaving the canvas to all appearance safe, but really arranged so as to give the would-be intruder an agreeable sensation, something akin to that experienced by the victim in the children's game of the Queen of Sheba. When we arrived at a port, I used to place my chair on the part of the upper deck just above my cabin, and take one of the battens to bed with me; and after I had turned in, I used to wait and listen till I heard a bump, and then I knew the custom-house man was rubbing himself, and I felt happy.

We took just a little over four weeks coming home, touching at Rio—where I didn't land this time, because of the quarantine season—Bahia, Pernambuco, and Maceio, but we didn't meet any adventures. At Pernambuco we took on board some engineers from the new railway there, amongst whom was an old Etonian, who had been in the higher parts of the school and an enormous swell in the boats when I had just entered; of course we hadn't known each other then, and I would have eaten my hat to have earned the honour of a word from him; but all those sort of distinctions were forgotten now, and the free-masonry of Eton sealed us with an everlasting bond, and gave us an endless topic of conversation for the rest of the voyage.

Getting up as late as possible before breakfast, so as not to make the day any longer than we could help; spending the time after breakfast chiefly in wishing for lunch-time to arrive, and the time after lunch in much the same way, only that then we were wishing for dinner; feeling all the evening till supper-time that we were wasting such glorious opportunities for self-improvement, and wondering what there really is in a sea-voyage that makes one feel so disinclined to settle down to anything definite, but resolving that on the very next day the lethargy should be shaken off, and an example set to all future voyagers; supper; pipe in the after-gangway, and then bed; so day after day passed by, and night after night closed in, and the old *Tagus* plodded on, and we began to speculate as to what change we should find at

home when we got back. The weather became uninviting after we had crossed the equator, so I spent a good deal of my time below in the gangway near the doctor's cabin, reading and trying to colour a meerschaum, which till then I had always regarded as about the lowest state to which the human intellect was capable of falling.

We touched at St. Vincent and Lisbon, but we couldn't land anywhere, as we were invariably prevented by the yellow flag at our masthead. We passed the Peak this time at a distance of about sixty miles, and I was more satisfied with its appearance than when I had seen it before, as it did more credit to itself as a Peak, stretching up straight out of the sea with nothing to mar its effect.

Up the coast of Portugal and into the Bay; and a fine tossing we had there. However, we all bore it very well; and we turned the corner and were told that we must prepare for landing next morning.

I worked hard, and finished "Lothair" that evening.

* * * * *

It was a wild night. I had been lying for some time at the bottom of the boat in a sort of half slumber, half torpor, when a movement amongst those of the survivors of the ship's crew who had huddled together in the bows aroused me, and I sat up and looked around. In an instant I saw that what I had been anxiously anticipating for the last forty days was about to happen. Ever since the command of the remnant of the ship's

company had devolved upon me, the Captain and all the officers having gone down with the ship, and the doctor having disabled himself by having recourse to an oblivion-causing opiate, I had noticed symptoms of intended mutiny among such of the crew as had crowded into this, the last of the boats, much to the inconvenience of the passengers. The butcher's mate, a rough-looking man, had always been the foremost in resenting my assumption of the authority that I saw I must necessarily take upon myself if any of my fellow-creatures were to be saved at all. He it was who had kicked out the head of our last keg of water, saying that it was useless to carry all that extra weight on board the boat if there was no brandy to mix with it; he it was who had been convicted of picking the pocket of our rich Brazilian passenger when he supposed that the rest of his fellows in distress were all asleep; and he it was who had been constantly heard to mutter dark threats against "land-lubbers who thought they could manage a boat better nor them who had been brought up to it from their cradle." Now he was conspiring with the black cook, and by the light of a fusee which they had struck in the bows I could see these two ruffians inserting the point of a knife into one of the other sailors who lay crouched beside them, all unconscious of their villainy, and dipping a J pen, which I recognized as having been purloined from my travelling writing-desk, into the blood that trickled from the wound, signing a document which bound them mutually to stand by each other through thick

and thin till they had accomplished their foul purpose of killing and eating—me.

What was to be done now under these rather trying circumstances? No help could be expected from those who I knew would, if they could, have supported me, for they were lying unable even to help themselves, coiled up in the most inextricable, and indeed I might almost say, ludicrous combinations of legs and arms under the thwarts in the more after-part of the boat. I could not help smiling even in the middle of my distress at the manner in which they had tied themselves up in knots which any London acrobat would have been proud to imitate. And besides, even had they been capable of rendering me any assistance, my Cambridge education told me that it would be hardly proper for me to disturb them so roughly in their slumbers, for though we were all now brothers and sisters in misfortune, I had up to the time of the shipwreck never set eyes on one of them before, and I had not been properly introduced to any of them. There was nothing to do then, I saw, but to face the danger single-handed.

I saw that the conspirators had now made every preparation; the butcher's mate had put on a large cocked hat and a pair of long boots with green tops to them, and had filled up a large old-fashioned-looking blunderbuss to the muzzle with soda-water corks, using as wads slips torn off old copies of the *Tagus Gazette;* the cook had painted his face and body after the manner of his tribe to resemble the bones of a skeleton, and

provided himself with a banjo and a pair of bones to incite his comrade with strains of wild music to the perpetration of the deed; and now they were only waiting till I should be off my guard to carry out their diabolical scheme. But I determined that at any rate I would sell my life dearly. I felt behind in the tails of my dress-coat, which together with my pyjamas, was the attire I had assumed when called upon to take command of the boat, as the most fitting for the occasion, and drawing out my revolver and my gaucho-knife, looked to see that the caps of the one were in order, and that the other was as keen as a razor. Then I waited too.

The minutes and hours passed on, seeming like days and weeks, but still we waited. At last the impatience of their wickedness could stand it no longer, and a preliminary movement on their part told me that the moment for action had arrived. They rose up in the extreme bows of the boat and faced towards me. All at once as by a miracle the boat itself seemed to have executed a sort of telescopic movement, by which the bows were elongated to a distance of some hundred and twenty yards from me, with ten flights of thwarts between; and at the same time the whole of the other four of the crew who had been lying till now apparently unconscious of what was going on, rose up, attired in light zephyrs and running shorts, and placed themselves in line with their ringleaders, one foot in advance of the other, their elbows drawn back, their fists clenched, and their bodies craning forward ready for the start. I

found I had somehow got hold of a small white flag in one of my hands, and as soon as I saw that they were all fairly in a line, I let it fall as a signal for the commencement of the race. My fellow-passengers at my end had also by this time recovered themselves, and were now standing in a crowd around me, watching the result. On came the competitors, without apparently an inch to choose between them, breasting the obstacles in their way and rising and falling as one man as they surmounted them in succession. The excitement became greater and greater; the spectators shouted—

* * * * * *

"Mr. Rollinston! Mr. Rollinston!! Aren't you going to get up? We're in sight of England, and the first breakfast-bell has just rung!" It was the voice of my steward. I rose and dressed hurriedly and went on deck, but I was too late to see anything, as a dense fog had come on meanwhile and shut out the view, and we had now dropped to half-speed, and were proceeding slowly up Channel, only judging of our position by means of the patent sounding apparatus.

We were delayed considerably by the fog, and did not eventually arrive at Southampton till about five o'clock in the evening. But at last the ship was made secure at the side of the docks, and after passing through the custom-house we got our things to the railway station and took our places in the last train to Waterloo. And then came the journey up, and the happy welcome to the bosom of my family.

EPILOGUE.

AND I lay in bed in the morning and thought.

Conscience said to me, "Well, John, here you are back again at last. You have had a long trip; you have seen varieties of men and manners; and your journey has not been altogether free from opportunities such as adventurous dispositions might have delighted in, and made much of. Now what do you think of it all?"

"Well," I replied, "I suppose I'm the better for it, but—"

I have three small sisters, and their daily musical torture is all administered out of the same Primary Instructor, the place of said torture being situate immediately under my bedroom, and the time fixed between the hours of eight and half-past nine in the morning. I am beginning to know by now the exact stage that each of the victims has arrived at in her progress towards the final point of accomplishment, by piecing together the recognizable fragments of the particular air that each one is struggling with, and remembering how far on its place is in the book. When I had left home, the youngest was still labouring at Haydn's "Surprise;" the two others were abreast, the elder one having held back so long at "Annie Laurie" that

the younger had come up with her, and they were both preparing to help each other past it in a duet. And now the old familiar sounds of woe rose from below, and I listened. But they did not form themselves into the strains of "Annie Laurie" any longer. Four months of perseverance before my departure had at last effected the desired object, as I had known it must; they had surmounted the obstacle during my absence, and were now evidently continuing on their way independently of each other. I listened, and tried to recall if I had ever before heard anything like what was being played now.

* * * * *

"Well?" said Conscience, again obtruding itself on my notice.

* * * * *

Then it dawned upon me. The performer had waded through the first difficulties of the air, and was now engaged in the last pause before coming in at the end with a triumphant rush. "Listen!" I said.

* * * * *

And the answer came from the piano—

THE END.

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